

Oasis Academy Blakenhale Junior

Outmore Road, Garretts Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 0XG

Inspection dates

16–17 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in the key stage 2 tests in reading and in mathematics was low.
- Until recently, pupils across the school were making only expected progress and not catching up with other pupils nationally.
- The deployment of teaching assistants sometimes has a limited impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders' detailed knowledge about pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is often not used effectively to inform the setting of work for these pupils at an appropriate level.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers often do not follow the school's marking policy by making sure that pupils respond to written feedback on their work. This reduces pupils' ability to make progress by learning from their mistakes.
- Teaching in mathematics is too variable. Staff do not use mathematical language consistently or explain how to perform calculations in the same way. Sometimes explanations are not securely based on what pupils already understand.
- The work set for the most able pupils in mathematics is often not precisely matched to their needs.

The school has the following strengths

- In 2015, the academy trust acted decisively to address declining standards in the school. The current principal has quickly established high expectations for pupils' behaviour and teachers' performance, and the school is improving.
- Leaders at all levels have a sharp understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans are very well judged. One result is that the quality of teaching, especially of reading, is improving rapidly.
- The school's curriculum, with a particular emphasis on health and fitness, is well designed to engage pupils' interest.
- Pupils love coming to school, conduct themselves well and take a consistent pride in their work. Attendance has risen sharply, and is now average.
- The school's effective safeguarding procedures and vigilant staff ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils feel secure, and treat each other with respect.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers provide work which is challenging but achievable for the most able pupils
 - making sure that all staff use the same accurate terminology and teach the same approaches to calculations
 - ensuring that all staff develop pupils' understanding of new concepts, building step by step on pupils' previous learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - making sure that all teaching assistants receive sufficient training to enable them to be successful at all the tasks they are asked to perform
 - organising the deployment of teaching assistants to maximise their impact on pupils' learning
 - improving the communication about pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that classroom staff are consistently able to provide work which is at the right level.
- Speed up pupils' progress by giving them greater opportunities to respond to feedback and so learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have acted rapidly and judiciously to raise standards in the school. They have put in place clear expectations for pupils' behaviour, and implemented effective procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. Senior leaders are now holding teachers to account for their performance. As a result, pupils' progress is speeding up and teaching is now improving rapidly, although it is not yet consistently good.
- Senior and middle leaders have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and their views of the teaching observed during the inspection accorded with those of the inspectors. Improvement plans are rigorous, focused on the right priorities, and include clear arrangements by which their impact can be judged. Leaders' decision to focus first on the teaching of reading has led to rapid improvement, and they are now turning their attention to the teaching of mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment are regularly checked against those of other teachers in the school, against other schools locally and against other academies within the trust. They have monitored carefully the implementation of the new system for assessing pupils' performance, and recently adjusted it to allow the setting of higher targets for the most able pupils.
- Staff, including those teachers at an early stage in their careers, told inspectors that the training they receive is proving very helpful in developing their skills. This has been particularly true in reading. Leaders' judgements about teachers' performance are linked precisely to their pupils' progress.
- The school's curriculum successfully engages pupils in learning. It is imaginative, and gives a key place to health and fitness, linked both to the science of the human body and to feelings of self-esteem. Subjects are combined in interesting ways and much work in English is based effectively on the topics pupils are studying. Regular trips to places of interest, such as the BBC studios or the National Space Centre, help to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities too, in sport, in creative areas such as singing and textiles and in the Duke of Edinburgh's Junior Award Scheme.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well through taught lessons and assemblies. Pupils understand and respect school rules. They recognise how they can play their part in helping others and on the day of the inspection some were selling wristbands for Children in Need. Pupils appreciate the importance of tolerance for those of different backgrounds and beliefs. They understand democracy, recognising the importance of representing their peers on the school council and the sports council – reflecting the good teaching of British values.
- The school has spent the physical education and sports premium effectively in employing specialist coaches and broadening participation in a wide range of sports. Last year, this led to pupils making significant gains in fitness to the point where this exceeded nationally recognised standards.

- The pupil premium has been spent on a wide range of strategies both to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are fully engaged in their learning and to help them to catch up. This is now proving effective, as disadvantaged pupils' progress across the school begins to speed up.
- Leaders are skilled in identifying pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Improvements in the behaviour of those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties demonstrate the school's success in meeting their needs. However, inspection evidence showed that leaders do not provide staff with the information and guidance needed to allow them to reliably set work for pupils who have special educational needs at the right level. As a result, the impact of the expenditure of additional money provided for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is uneven.
- Staff at all levels value the opportunity to work with other schools in the trust. In addition to checking standards, staff are able to discuss matters of common concern and learn from best practice.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The trust holds all formal responsibilities for governance. Through its regional director, it makes sure that it is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the progress of different groups of pupils. The regional director holds leaders to account through frequent and regular meetings, termly checks on key information and formal reviews which include the perspective of independent consultants. The trust scrutinises the expenditure of the pupil premium, and other additional money to support particular groups of pupils. It ensures that the school works within its budget.
- In the summer of 2015, the trust took decisive action to secure standards amidst concerns that the performance of the school was drifting.
- The regional director works closely with the academy council, which provides staff, parents and members of the local community with the opportunity to oversee the work of the school. As councillors become increasingly confident in their roles, the trust is supporting the council in its ambition to be more rigorous and analytical in its discussions. Some councillors use their specialist knowledge, for example in the management of health and safety, to strengthen the governance of the school.
- Together, the representatives of the trust and councillors make sure that the school keeps pupils safe in all respects. They ensure that the right procedures are used when new staff are appointed, and that the necessary checks are made on all who come into contact with children.
- The trust organises the management of the principal's performance, and scrutinises the principal's recommendations on the pay and performance of other staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements, and all policies and procedures are current. The principal issues regular updates to staff, and ensures that they are familiar with child protection guidance and have been fully trained. All staff are alert to any hazards or changes in pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors found that staff keep detailed records which are stored securely. They are quick to contact parents when they identify circumstances which may make pupils potentially vulnerable, and then work with them effectively. When the need arises, they make rapid contact with other agencies that protect children. When staff do not receive an adequate response, they persist until they know that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time, while improving, remains inconsistent. Acute disappointment with the recent results in the key stage 2 reading test led leaders to prioritise the teaching of reading, and inspectors saw much strong practice and heard pupils talk about their renewed enthusiasm and confidence in reading. However, leaders rightly acknowledge that there is more to be done to improve the teaching of mathematics.
- Teaching in mathematics is too variable. Staff do not use specialist mathematical terms consistently, and sometimes use mathematical language in a confusing way. The new calculations policy is not yet embedded in classroom practice. Although some teaching presented mathematical concepts well, other explanations were not based securely on pupils' existing understanding.
- Teachers plan work in mathematics to take account of pupils' different starting points, but this is sometimes not effective for particular groups of pupils. On occasion during the inspection, work for the most able failed to extend their thinking. At other times, work for them was too difficult, and it took teachers too long to recognise that they required further support to make progress.
- Evidence from pupils' books in a number of subjects showed that teachers often do not follow the school's marking policy. Pupils have limited opportunities to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their work and to improve it, either by correcting mistakes or tackling additional tasks.
- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement because the work is often not properly matched to their abilities, usually because it is too hard. When pupils are working in small groups, staff are sometimes unable to provide the considered explanation that pupils need to grasp ideas which have already proved difficult.
- The contribution which teaching assistants make to pupils' learning is variable. Sometimes they use questioning skilfully to break the learning down for less-able pupils into more manageable steps, or to probe and extend pupils' understanding. On other occasions, the organisation of the classroom means that they are at times too passive and have limited opportunity to help pupils with their work.
- The learning of all pupils benefits from the warm relationships between adults and pupils, and pupils' enthusiasm for their lessons. Year 3 pupils spoke to inspectors animatedly about their work in science on tooth decay, for example. Teaching in

physical education is characterised by precise attention to the skills required to perform a wide range of movements and activities. Varied homework across the school makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

- Inspection evidence showed that teaching of writing is improving and teachers ensure that pupils have a clear sense of the different styles and purposes of writing, and can adopt them successfully. Pupils are encouraged to redraft their writing, and this proves effective both in improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar and in developing the content of the piece. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to write about their work in other curriculum areas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in the school, and younger pupils who spoke with an inspector said that they never felt that older pupils' behaviour was too boisterous. Pupils say that on rare occasions a few pupils are unpleasant, but that this is rapidly sorted out. They cannot recall a racist or discriminatory incident.
- The school successfully teaches pupils how to be safe in several respects. They receive visits from those representing public services, such as the nearby fire station, and have a good understanding of road safety. They have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe online, and recall a visit from an officer of a national children's charity. Messages about internet safety and social networking were reinforced in a recent newsletter to parents.
- Year 6 pupils are confident that the school is preparing them well for the move to secondary school, and believe that the recent introduction of a year group uniform including a tie has helped them in this respect. They also have an awareness appropriate to their age of how education is relevant for later life, including their possible careers.
- The opportunities for physical exercise both in lessons and outside the taught curriculum have increased pupils' enjoyment of school, and enhanced their self-confidence. Results show that alongside an emphasis on healthy eating, it is also improving their physical health in a neighbourhood where levels of obesity have been particularly high. Some parents have also chosen to participate alongside their children.
- Pupils are polite and friendly, and treat visitors with courtesy. They are confident that the school is improving and willing to contribute to its success, for example by taking up positions of responsibility.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Strong leadership has created a culture in which good learning can flourish. Pupils very much enjoy learning, and are willing to work hard. They collaborate effectively when

asked to do so, and help each other with their work. Importantly, they concentrate well in lessons when an adult is not working directly with their group.

- Pupils understand the rules for classroom behaviour, follow staff instructions promptly and settle to their work without fuss. They always present their work carefully. They wear their uniforms with pride, and all who took part in physical education lessons were wearing the official school kit. Just occasionally, when the classroom discussion does not engage their interest, some pupils look a little bored.
- Pupils' conduct at social times is sensible and polite, and they make good use of the play equipment provided. There were a very few pieces of litter in the dining hall after break, but other pupils picked them up. The school has not excluded a pupil permanently since the last inspection, and the rate of fixed-term exclusion, which had risen in the academic year 2014/15, has fallen sharply to be in line with the national average.
- Information provided by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence shows that the recent implementation of a specific programme to support a small number of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs has already had a marked impact on their behaviour, and made them better prepared for the classroom.
- Pupils' attendance, including that for groups of pupils, has improved sharply, and this academic year is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also fallen to be broadly in line with the rate found nationally. These improvements reflect intense and well-coordinated work with a small number of families.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because until the start of this academic year, their progress across the school was only that expected of pupils nationally, so that pupils were not catching up for weaker progress made when they were in the younger years. As a result, the proportions of pupils across the school who are currently working at the standards expected for their age generally remain below the national average.
- In this year's key stage 2 results, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading and mathematics was low. Information supplied by the school shows that standards in writing were in line with the national average. The school has conducted its own tests on pupils' ability when they come into the school, and these would indicate that the progress across key stage 2 made by those who left the school in 2016 was close to the national average.
- Inspection evidence confirmed the school's information that progress across the school is now faster, and beginning to rise above that which is expected nationally. Pupils' progress in physical education is good.
- Disadvantaged pupils make up the majority of the school population. Information supplied by the school and supported by inspection evidence shows that there is little difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is now beginning to rise in line with other pupils as the impact of the expenditure of the pupil premium grant is felt first on

pupils' engagement with learning and then on their academic achievement.

- New wholesale strategies for the teaching of reading have enabled pupils to gain a quicker and more reliable understanding of a short text. As they explained to inspectors, they now have the confidence to pass over individual words that they do not recognise, and try a range of different approaches to the text as a whole. At the same time, a better choice of fiction and non-fiction texts has markedly increased pupils' enthusiasm for independent reading, and reading diaries show that most pupils read at home every night. As a result of these twin initiatives, progress and standards in reading are rising sharply.
- Younger, weaker readers in the school are excited by the books they can choose from the class libraries. They have the confidence and the skills to sound out unfamiliar words. The most able readers are fluent orally, and refer to the text unprompted to support and exemplify their views. As the school acknowledges, their experience tends to be limited to contemporary writing for children.
- Information supplied by the school shows that progress across the school in mathematics is beginning to speed up as teachers and leaders tackle the weaknesses in teaching. Inspection evidence shows that this improvement is less consistent than that in reading because work is less securely based on what pupils already understand.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in writing has been higher than that in reading or mathematics. Pupils know well how to write in different styles, and pay close attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Inspection evidence shows that only a small proportion of the most able pupils, most of whom are also disadvantaged, are on track to attain the higher standards at the end of the key stage. Leaders' raised expectations have now begun to speed up their progress, which is improving, especially in lower key stage 2. This improvement remains somewhat patchy in mathematics as teachers sometimes struggle to turn the principle of greater challenge into learning activities which precisely meet pupils' needs.
- The academic progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains too variable. An online scheme for teaching phonics has enabled weak readers to make rapid gains in the range of words they can identify and understand. Progress in other subjects is uneven because teachers do not provide work which enables them to start with what they already know.
- Pupils' increasing self-confidence and their enjoyment of a broad curriculum are helping to prepare them for secondary school. However, the rise in progress and attainment needs to be sustained to ensure that pupils leave school with the essential basic skills needed for a smooth transition.

School details

Unique reference number	139129
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10020042

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Chris Edwards
Principal	Clare Hoods-Truman
Telephone number	0121 783 3960
Website	www.oasisacademyblakenhalejunior.org
Email address	info@oasisblakenhalejunior.org
Date of previous inspection	10 September 2014

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Blakenhale Junior is a larger than average junior school. The school runs a breakfast club on a pay-as-you-go basis.
- Just over half of the pupils in the school are White British. Smaller proportions are drawn from a number of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average.
- The principal took up her post in September 2015. She is also the principal of Oasis Academy Blakenhale Infants, which occupies an adjacent site. Some other senior leaders are also employed to work in both schools. The same academy council provides local oversight for both schools.

- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the detailed arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information about the detailed arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 19 lessons and three learning walks. Ten observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with a representative of Oasis Academy Trust, the school's sponsor, and the chair of the academy council.
- Three groups of pupils, two chosen at random, met with inspectors. They also spoke with many other pupils informally. One inspector listened to pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 read.
- The inspectors looked at many workbooks in their visits to classrooms, and, with senior leaders, scrutinised in depth the work produced by several pupils this academic year and from 2015/16. They considered a wide range of information about pupils' current and recent performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included development plans and their evaluations, policies, the principal's reports to the academy council and minutes of their meetings, and reports on visits to the school by representatives of the trust. They looked in detail at records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspection team took account of the 17 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own recent questionnaire for parents. They spoke with parents delivering their children to school. The inspectors also considered the 17 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Lomas	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Butlin	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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

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

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

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2016