

Olive Alternative Provision Academy

Daiglen Drive, The Culver Centre, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 5RR

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that essential safeguarding practices and safety checks are systematic, robust and effective. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of their work in keeping pupils and staff safe.
- Staff turnover and changes in leadership have meant that, until recently, actions to improve the quality of provision for pupils have been unsuccessful or, when effective, have not been sustained. Too many pupils do not attend, behave, learn or achieve well enough.
- A considerable number of pupils do not re-integrate back into a full-time mainstream school in a timely enough way. Despite efforts by leaders and the trust, there are too often occasions where pupils are ready for next-step provision that is not being found in the locality. This is especially true of a significant minority of pupils who require specialist provision.
- Leaders have not ensured that the funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils is having enough of an impact on pupils' attendance and achievement.
- Leaders have not been able to secure a suitable learning environment for pupils in the primary provision. Pupils, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, use poor-quality indoor and outdoor space which does not meet their various complex needs.
- Despite efforts by the trust and leaders, there is a lack of shared clarity between the trust, local authority and other stakeholders about the purpose of the school. As a result, too many pupils are placed on roll when they do not meet the criteria for admission.

The school has the following strengths

- The recent appointment of a permanent headteacher has started to bring about much-needed stability in the provision.
- The new headteacher has recruited a senior leadership team who have been quick to create more secure systems and procedures to start to address the inadequacies in the school.
- The trust has improved its ability to provide effective support to the school. As a result, additional personnel are now ably supporting new leaders to establish much-needed strategic leadership.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent action to ensure that the school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements are effective by:
 - maintaining written records and supporting evidence that identify the actions taken to protect pupils
 - routinely checking safeguarding records to ensure that systems and procedures are effective in keeping pupils safe
 - undertaking routine checks on the quality and safety of site provision
 - ensuring that all essential site maintenance is undertaken quickly and effectively
 - referring all children who are missing from education to the local authority, within the statutory timeframe
 - ensuring that risk assessments for educational trips and visits adequately assess the potential hazards of activities for staff and pupils, and giving clear guidance about how to minimise these risks.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - refining and clarifying the roles of all leaders in the school, including those in the local governing body
 - ensuring that there is effective leadership of provision for children looked after, literacy, the use of pupil premium, safeguarding arrangements, site safety and maintenance, and attendance
 - clarifying the purpose of the school with all stakeholders, including the local authority and local schools, so that there are shared expectations about admission and re-integration back into mainstream provision
 - continuing to work with the local authority on the backlog of pupils who require a long-overdue decision about their application for an education, health and care plan, and subsequent appropriate provision
 - ensuring that trust personnel, most notably at executive headteacher level, continue to support the new leadership team to embed their work and bring stability to the school
 - embedding the actions taken so far to monitor the quality of provision for the pupils in home tuition
 - continuing development of the curriculum to ensure that pupils receive a tailored pathway that suits their specific needs, and that the quality of this provision is

monitored effectively.

■ Improve attendance and behaviour by:

- developing new systems to urgently increase the attendance of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and those who attend alternative provision
- rapidly increasing the provision for the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils, as well as complex learning needs, so that they can develop better relationships and interact more effectively and, as a result, make better progress
- embedding the new behaviour systems and closely scrutinising leaders' analysis of the effectiveness of the systems, so that interventions to support pupils to rectify their behaviour are timely and effective.

■ Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:

- developing the new assessment system so that it can be used more effectively by teachers and leaders to ensure pupils make better progress
- urgently addressing the poor-quality indoor and outdoor provision of the primary site, so that it successfully provides the nurturing, tactile learning environment that meets the complex learning and mental health needs of pupils
- continuing to develop the new approaches to improving the quality of teaching
- sharing the examples of good practice in the school with all teachers.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers without the agreement of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

An external review of the use of the additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils (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

Inadequate

- Leaders do not ensure that systems around child protection, safeguarding and site safety are systematic or rigorous. Consequently, safeguarding is ineffective.
- The trust has not secured consistent leadership or staffing in the school, until recently. As a result of this instability, leaders have failed to bring sustained improvements to the school's provision.
- New leaders, and some governors, although bringing more stability, are not consistently clear on their responsibilities and accountabilities. Owing to the significant issues in the school, and continuing turbulence at executive headteacher level, there are shortfalls in the leadership oversight of safeguarding, children looked after, literacy, pupil premium, site safety and attendance.
- There is not a locally agreed vision and purpose for the school. There are significant numbers of Year 11 pupils who came to the local area recently and are on the school's admissions register, but who attend other local schools on a full-time basis. Leaders and the local authority could not explain the rationale behind this decision; nor is it clear how the safety and well-being of these pupils are being appropriately monitored in the locality.
- Despite the efforts of leaders and the trust to find places in the locality, too many pupils who are ready to be re-integrated back into mainstream education are not able to do so. Too often, children are at the school for a number of years rather than for the short-term supportive provision that is intended. Additionally, a number of pupils do not sustain their new places in local schools.
- Leaders are not able to show that the additional funding that they receive is making a meaningful difference to disadvantaged pupils' attendance, behaviour or achievement.
- Although new leaders are making efforts to quickly acquire the appropriate support for pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities wait too long for a decision about whether they are eligible for an education, health and care plan. Consequently, some pupils do not receive appropriate or timely support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The diligent new assistant headteacher at the primary site is hampered in making the necessary improvement to pupils' education because of the deprived learning environment. Pupils are accessing a poor-quality indoor and outdoor space which does not provide any positive, nurturing experiences for pupils, especially the many who have complex social and emotional needs.
- The new headteacher has brought much-needed stability since her appointment in September 2016. Her new senior team has a secure understanding of most of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. The rapid work that they have undertaken thus far has been to establish the basic systems and processes so urgently needed. Consequently, it is too early to see the impact of their work.
- More recently, the trust has increased its capacity to meet the needs of the school. School improvement advisers are undertaking work to establish monitoring processes

for teaching, learning, assessment and progress alongside leaders in the school. This is giving leaders a better understanding of pupils' starting points and the quality of teaching.

- Leaders have started work on ensuring that the curriculum for all pupils is more appropriate. There is now a clear programme to welcome pupils when they arrive at the school. Additionally, there is better support to help pupils' transition into new schools when they are ready. The alternative provision and leaders' initial work is showing early signs of success in beginning to re-integrate some pupils from home tuition into the main school. Pupils access a range of alternative provision which generally suits their interests and aspirations.
- The deputy headteacher has ensured that there is more provision to teach pupils about the important values in society, such as tolerance and equality. Morning tutor times, assemblies, drama companies, and work with other local schools are developing well. This is ensuring that pupils now have appropriate guidance about their roles both in the local community and in wider society.
- The funding that the school receives to ensure that primary-aged pupils access more sports is being used to facilitate specialist local provision that the school site cannot provide for them.

Governance of the school

- The trust has recruited a talented and well-informed local governing body, including representation from the local authority. This board actively challenges leaders on the quality of provision and the achievement of pupils.
- The local governing body and trust are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. They have been pre-emptive in working with the local authority to support some areas of improvement for the school, such as the weak provision of the primary site environment, and the creation of a new site for the secondary provision.
- In response to the recent concerns raised by the local governing body, the trust has undertaken further work on refining and clarifying the roles of trust members and the local governing body. However, there is still some uncertainty among the local governing body members about the difference between their roles and responsibilities, and those of the trust. This has been a contributing factor leading to a lack of systematic and robust checking on some aspects of the school's work, particularly around safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that the systems and processes for child protection and safeguarding are systematic and robust. Various written records for child protection are either incomplete, or do not record the actions taken to ensure pupils' safety. This includes evidence of the actions taken to safeguard and care for children looked after. Consequently, leaders are not able to adequately assess whether their safeguarding and child protection systems are effective.

- Leaders do not consistently uphold the statutory timeframes to report to the local authority when children have gone missing from education. Although school leaders try to make contact with parents and/or carers when children do not attend the school, the statutory reporting to the local authority is sometimes far too slow.
- Leaders have not ensured that safety of the site is a priority for them to action, monitor and review. Leaders were not absolutely clear on whether essential statutory works identified as being required in July 2015 on the primary site had been undertaken. Equally, on the secondary site, inspectors found that aspects of the site, easily accessible to pupils, were unsafe.
- Leaders do not measure appropriately the various risks of some of the off-site activities that pupils undertake. Too often, risk assessments are of poor quality and fail to review the potential hazards for pupils and staff. For example, many trips and visits involve staff transporting pupils in their own cars; leaders do not adequately assess the risks associated with this. Leaders do not provide any safeguarding or safety guidance to staff about this method of travel.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate recruitment checks are made on the staff who are employed at the school. However, some aspects of the record-keeping are not rigorous enough.
- Staff have been trained in the most up-to-date guidance, to minimise the risks of pupils being vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Their referrals of concern to leaders show that they have a good understanding of the risks, and how to record referrals appropriately.
- Pupils say that the staff listen to them and act on any concerns that they have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching does not adequately support the development of pupils' literacy and writing skills across subjects. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are inconsistent, and often too low. Consequently, pupils are not being given opportunities to develop their literacy skills, or to write extensively in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not plan activities consistently enough that engage pupils' interest. Too often resources, activities and tasks do not encourage pupils to want to learn more, or deepen their understanding. On occasion, activities are created to pacify pupils or fill time, but do not help them learn. Consequently, too much learning time is wasted in lessons.
- Teachers' use of assessment is underdeveloped and the previously high turnover of staff, most notably at the primary site, means it has been challenging to establish consistency. Leaders now have more precise assessment systems, but teachers are not yet using them confidently to inform their planning for the needs of pupils.
- More often than not, pupils receive the same work irrespective of their ability. Pupils who have the potential to achieve more, especially the most able pupils, are not identified quickly enough. They do not receive work or guidance which helps them to deepen their understanding or develop their skills as quickly, or as well, as they could.

- Pupils do not understand how their learning links together from one lesson to another. As a result, many pupils complete tasks with little understanding of what skills they are learning, or knowledge they are developing.
- Leaders have now implemented a feedback policy which is starting to be established more consistently. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils act on the guidance that they receive to improve their work or understanding. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- New leaders are beginning to audit and assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for their pupils who access alternative provision or home tuition. Early signs indicate that this is starting to support the successful re-integration of more pupils into the main school provision from home tuition.
- Some staff work hard to support pupils' ability to learn cooperatively, so that there is a welcoming learning atmosphere where pupils feel safe to ask questions and make mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is inadequate.
- Leaders have failed to systematically undertake effective safety and safeguarding checks to ensure that they are taking all necessary precautions to keep pupils and staff safe.
- Leaders have yet to establish any regular and effective strategies or actions to support the significant mental health, or learning, needs of many pupils at the school. New leaders are becoming increasingly clear on the complexity of needs owing to their diligent work to improve the quality of induction and baseline assessment. However, too many pupils do not develop the social and emotional skills they require in order to successfully move on to a next-step provision.
- The initial work of new leaders to support pupils, especially those in home tuition, to begin to access education on the school site is starting to show signs of success. However, this is not yet fully developed and pupils are not re-integrating back into lessons as quickly as they could.
- Leaders have introduced new mechanisms to support pupils' induction to the school and re-integration into mainstream provision. This is showing some early signs of success.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They feel that staff take their concerns seriously, do not tolerate any examples of discrimination or inequality, and deal with rare cases of bullying effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils receiving a fixed-term exclusion is much higher than that of their classmates. Although leaders can provide evidence of some reduction

in the school's use of fixed-term exclusions, instances are still too high.

- Pupils' attendance is very poor and shows no sign of improvement. Significant numbers of pupils, including those who are children looked after, disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not attend regularly or have very low attendance. New leaders have started to implement strategies to reward improved attendance, although this has yet to show any positive impact.
- Leaders have recently implemented a new behaviour policy which is improving the quality of information that they receive about pupils' behaviour. Consequently, leaders have identified that the numbers of incidents of poor behaviour, especially persistent disruptive behaviour, poor learning attitudes and physical aggression, are far too high and rising.
- Pupils generally wear their uniform appropriately. Following relentless work by leaders in the autumn term, pupils are now moving around the site more calmly.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Leadership turbulence in the past has meant that previous pupils' progress has not been monitored effectively. Leaders were unable to provide evidence that thorough monitoring of pupils' progress from their various starting points had occurred in 2015/16, especially for Years 7 to 10 or in key stage 1. The information provided was minimal and uninformative. This includes the checking of pupils' achievement in alternative provision at key stage 4 for 2015/16.
- While there is some evidence that more pupils attained qualifications by the end of Year 11 in 2015/16, leaders are not confident that the baseline measurements in the past for these pupils were entirely accurate. Therefore, although information shows that progress was too slow, it is not clear if this is an accurate reflection of pupils' achievement.
- Leaders acknowledge that the proportion of pupils in Year 11 in 2015/16 who made adequate progress in English and mathematics was far too low. Consequently, too many pupils left the school without achieving essential basic skills.
- High levels of absence mean that a significant proportion of pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able pupils.
- The trust identified in December 2015 that too many pupils in key stage 2 were not likely to achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The subsequent interventions by the trust ensured that these pupils, many with special educational needs and/or disabilities, were supported to improve, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Too many pupils left in 2015 without a secure destination. The school was unable to provide information for 2015/16 leavers as it does not currently monitor the destinations of pupils, and is awaiting information from the local authority. Leaders have identified that information, advice and guidance for pupils who are leaving in Year 11, while improving with the use of the impartial careers adviser, is not of high quality.

- The new leadership, supported by the trust, now has a more accurate baseline for current pupils, and an assessment process which staff are starting to understand. Systems and processes are being established with the aid of a 'dashboard' that evaluates pupils' achievement on a half-termly basis', and plans are in place to continue to moderate this information to check its accuracy. At present, leaders cannot report on the progress of current pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	140861
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10026351

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mark Vickers
Headteacher	Alison Larkins
Telephone number	01708 853781
Website	http://apthurrock.oliveacademies.org.uk/
Email address	info.thurrock@oliveacademies.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about key stage 4 results, the curriculum, the projected spend for pupil premium for 2016/17, and the physical education and sport premium for primary schools.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a smaller than average school with capacity for 107 pupils. It is currently oversubscribed.
- The school provides short-term education and support to pupils who are vulnerable to exclusion or who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools.

- The school comprises two sites. The primary site provides education for a small number of pupils aged five to 11, most of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The secondary site provides education for a much larger cohort of secondary-aged pupils aged 11 to 16.
- The school is due to move its secondary provision to a new site in Tilbury in April 2017. This move was due to occur in February 2016 but was delayed owing to building works.
- Since April 2015, the school has been sponsored by the Olive Academies Trust. The predecessor school was a maintained provision under the authority of the local authority.
- Pupils typically enter the school with achievement significantly below the national average or after an extended period without formal education.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the additional funding (pupil premium) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school currently uses 11 alternative providers. These are Motorvations, Circles (farm), Circles (trade), BEP, IYC, Action Learning, Rally Sport, Gold Trowel, South Essex College, Future Gateways and Academy 1 Sports.
- A significant number of pupils on roll do not attend lessons on either site but access home tuition, provided by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook learning walks at both the primary and secondary sites, and reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors also visited an assembly. Some of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meeting with the headteacher, executive headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust, a middle leader, representatives from the local governing body and a number of other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with school improvement advisers from the trust, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors had telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority children's services team, and a representative from the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, site safety, achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- There were not enough responses on Ofsted's online parent questionnaire to be able to use them during the inspection. Instead inspectors spoke to parents both on-site and by telephone throughout the two days. Inspectors also met with a small group of pupils and used the school's own staff survey to evaluate staff perceptions of the provision.
- Inspectors observed pupils' arrival to the school, and their conduct at break and lunch, as well as between lessons.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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.

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