

# Inspection of Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

Minster Road, Minster-on-Sea, Kent ME12 3JQ

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Sixth-form provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Too many pupils feel unsafe at this school. Some pupils told us that they 'have had enough' of being jostled and hurt in corridors or verbally abused. Leaders and staff do too little to challenge the foul, homophobic, racist and sexist language which is commonplace across both sites. Pupils have little confidence in leaders' ability to deal with any concerns about bullying or discrimination. Pupils do not feel that they have a voice in this school. Their concerns are not listened to.

Leaders' expectations are too low. More than half of pupils choose not to attend school regularly. Too many who do attend school more regularly, are then persistently absent from lessons. Those who do attend lessons frequently have their learning disturbed by unruly behaviour.

The combination of the pandemic, changes in leadership and high levels of staff absence mean that leaders lack a firm grasp on maintaining positive behaviour across the school. Many lessons are taught by supply teachers because leaders have been unable to recruit the permanent staff that pupils deserve. As a result, pupils make poor progress through the curriculum.

Opportunities for enrichment are rare. Clubs and activities have not restarted since the pandemic. School trips are limited. However, a few pupils who battle through school life doing the right thing, are pleased to be rewarded in a number of ways, including a trip to a theme park.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Oasis Community Learning Trust has not been successful in making the improvements necessary to this school. Trustees and senior trust leaders know that strategies that work in the trust's other schools have not worked here. As a result, pupils have been failed for too long. Multiple fresh starts with new leaders and increased investment have raised false hopes and not brought about the intended improvements.

Some individual leaders and staff with strong moral purpose are trying to do the right things for the community and the pupils they serve. This includes the new headteacher who has clear plans for the future. However, it is all too new and too late for the pupils who attend the school on a daily basis.

The poor attendance and uncontrolled behaviour of pupils are the biggest barriers to pupils achieving well in this school. The use of suspensions and expulsions is very high. Only recently have strategies to improve attendance started to make a limited difference. The school provided much needed support to the families most impacted by the pandemic and continues to do so.

The curriculum is designed by the trust and implemented with varying success across different subjects. Some teachers, including in the sixth form, are skilled at helping pupils to build on what they already know. In English, skilled teachers are helping pupils to know and remember more. However, not enough is being done to help those pupils who have fallen behind with reading to catch up.

Some subject leaders have not successfully adapted the published curriculum to meet the needs, or starting points, of pupils in this school. Too few staff are accomplished at meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in their classes. Furthermore, pupils who have English as an additional language are sometimes left to flounder.

Pupils often end up in the 'bridge' provision due to poor behaviour rather than for support with a specific learning need. As a result, adults are not consistently able to meet the wide-ranging needs of all the pupils placed there. While some pupils are engaged by learning, others are not. Like elsewhere, lessons are too frequently disrupted by very poor behaviour.

In some subjects, the planned trust curriculum is not taught as intended or not even offered. While trust staff have delivered training to teachers, it is not having a significant impact on improving teaching across the school. This is because there is too much staff absence and not enough is done by leaders to check that messages from training are followed up.

Assessment practices are highly variable, so teachers do not routinely know what pupils need to learn next. Outcomes against national benchmarks at the end of key stage 4 have historically been very low with little sign of improvement. Most significantly, this is because of substantial weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics and the fact that very few pupils currently study a language at key stage 4.

Pupils have no trust in, or respect for their school. Vandalism, including offensive graffiti, poor behaviour and bad language are rife. Pupils feel that leaders spend too much time checking that their uniform is smart rather than keeping them safe. They told us that they get pushed and shoved while queuing up for uniform checks. Inspectors observed this too.

Sexist, homophobic and racist language regularly goes unchallenged. Some pupils have ingrained views that the taught curriculum does little to address. Personal, social and health education does not give pupils the knowledge and experiences they need to be well prepared for life in modern Britain, or to stay safe. For example, pupils had limited understanding of concepts such as consent and did not know the legal implications of sending 'nudes' to each other, even though they said this happened a lot.

Pupils have mixed views about the careers advice they have received. However, students in the sixth form enjoy the range of courses that are offered, which are not available elsewhere locally. Some pupils shared with inspectors their hopes for the

future which have been enabled by the specialist vocational courses they are studying. Pupils who have successfully completed sixth-form courses go on to university, further training or employment.

Some staff appreciate the training and professional development they have received. A significant minority are far less positive and feel that they are not well supported by leaders and are left to struggle, especially when dealing with challenging behaviour.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Pupils do not feel safe at school because of the very poor behaviour that is not successfully managed by leaders and staff. Furthermore, pupils who do not attend school on a daily basis are not always accounted for, so could be at risk of harm. The use of physical intervention by staff is not well managed or monitored.

The most vulnerable pupils are well supported by leaders who are responsible for safeguarding. Their attendance is monitored more closely. Checks are made on a daily basis to ensure they are safe. Designated safeguarding leads work well with other professionals to do all they can to keep these pupils safe from further harm.

Appropriate safeguarding checks have been made on the alternative providers that are supporting some of the other most vulnerable pupils. However, too many pupils are on part-time timetables with no clear plan to return to full-time education.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils do not feel safe at school. The trust and leaders have done too little to tackle widespread use of foul, abusive, racist, sexist and homophobic language. Too often this language goes unchallenged. Furthermore, pupils are worried about getting physically hurt or bullied because of the poor behaviour on site. The trust and leaders need to ensure that staff are trained and feel confident to implement the behaviour policy consistently in class and tackle antisocial behaviour around the school.
- Behaviour around the site is often dangerous and in lessons is frequently disruptive. As a result, pupils do not feel safe and have their lessons disturbed. Pupils are reluctant to report concerns as nothing has happened to improve things when they have in the past. The trust and leaders should ensure that there are clear systems in place for pupils to report concerns and feel heard.
- Too many pupils are absent from school and from lessons. Leaders do not know why some pupils are absent or where they are. This places them at risk of harm. The trust and leaders should ensure that all pupils are accounted for on a daily

basis to ensure they are safe. Leaders should continue to encourage all pupils to attend school on a daily basis by making it a more appealing place to be.

- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, some work is too difficult or inaccessible for pupils with SEND, pupils who have poor reading skills or pupils who speak English as an additional language. Some pupils do not have access to the full range of subjects they should learn. Leaders should ensure that all pupils have access to the full curriculum and that the curriculum takes account of pupils' starting points and additional needs.
- Teachers, especially those that are temporary, do not have all of the skills and knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively. Supply teachers do not have access to the same systems to manage behaviour and attendance. The information about pupils with SEND is not shared and understood with teaching staff. As a result, their needs cannot be adequately met. The trust and leaders should ensure that all staff, including those who are temporary, are well informed about the additional needs that the pupils they teach have, and put effective strategies in place to support them.
- The school has seen too many false fresh starts and promises of improvement. The trust has not managed to secure strong long-term leadership and improvement over time. Only now are leaders accurately identifying key characteristics of the community they serve and the needs that pupils have. The trust should ensure that throughout their tenure, this school has the full benefit of their resources, both financial and human, to do everything possible to turn around the education of the pupils the school serves. Staff in the trust, who lead on improvement, should consider carefully which strategies are most appropriate for pupils and staff in this school, rather than using generic improvement strategies.
- I strongly recommend that leaders, and those responsible for governance, do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 135721   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Kent   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10239880   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Secondary modern (non-selective)   |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 11 to 18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 1,485  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 110  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Caroline Taylor  |
| <b>Principal</b>                                  | Andrew Booth   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org">www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 8 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                                   |

## Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey is part of the Oasis Community Learning Trust which has 52 schools throughout England.
- The school is organised over two sites. The Minster site currently houses pupils in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. The Sheerness site provides for Year 7, the sixth form and the 'bridge' provision.
- The 'bridge' is an onsite specialist provision for pupils with SEND, especially those relating to social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses a number of registered alternative providers including the Rosewood School (ME19 5FF), Vocational Training Centre (ME10 3DZ) and the Alchemy School (ME9 9SN).
- The headteacher was appointed to the permanent full-time position in January 2022. Before this, he had an executive role supporting the previous headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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.

The inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted that raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding was effective and if pupils behaved well.

- The inspection was carried out with 15 minutes notice.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes, an assembly and around the school. They talked to pupils from every year group.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, the regional director and other senior staff from Oasis Community Learning Trust. He also met with other representatives of the trust responsible for school improvement. He held a telephone conversation with the chair of trustees and another trustee.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the record of recruitment checks, looked at training records and documentation related to safeguarding and behaviour. They met with designated safeguarding leads. They also spoke to many staff and pupils to understand the safeguarding culture in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector telephoned the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.



## **Inspection team**

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Dan Lambert

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Ofsted Inspector

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