

Oasis Academy Oldham

Hollins Road, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL8 4JZ

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, too many pupils in key stage 4 have underachieved significantly across many subjects. This is especially the case for the most able pupils. These pupils have made exceptionally poor progress for the last three years.
- Pupils in key stage 4 have too many gaps in their learning because of a legacy of weak teaching. This is particularly noticeable in science.
- The differences in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally at key stage 4 are not diminishing.
- Although pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum, weaknesses in the quality of teaching mean that pupils do not attain as well as they should in some subjects.
- The trust has recently acted to strengthen the leadership of the school. However, for many pupils, especially in key stage 4, this is too little, too late.
- Some pupils do not take pride in their work because some teachers have low expectations and accept work that is of a low standard. There are times when teachers do not use information about what pupils already know to plan learning that challenges pupils.
- Some pupils are not supported effectively to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum.
- A small minority of pupils do not behave sensibly on the corridors and during social times.
- Some teachers do not apply the school behaviour policy consistently. Consequently, there are times when low-level disruption has a negative effect on pupils' learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed principal and other senior leaders have a precise understanding of the school's weaknesses. They have taken effective action to bring about necessary change.
- Leaders' actions to improve teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in key stage 3.
- Staff work to establish strong links with families and the local community. Vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support from staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they learn about how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils appreciate the support that they receive to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Rates of attendance are improving towards the national average.
- Most pupils are confident learners who want to do well.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that pupils' progress and attainment improve swiftly, especially in key stage 4, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able pupils
 - use assessment information effectively to provide pupils with work that challenges them to achieve the standards of which they are capable
 - use information about pupils' achievement in key stage 4 to target historic gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in science
 - demand the best from pupils, so that pupils take pride in their work
 - develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly in relation to their spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Improve pupils' behaviour further, by:
 - reducing low-level disruption during learning
 - improving the behaviour of the small minority of pupils who do not behave sensibly around school and on the corridors.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - those responsible for governance hold leaders to account more diligently for the impact of their actions on the progress that pupils make in key stage 4
 - additional funding for disadvantaged pupils addresses the barriers to learning and the gaps in pupils' knowledge in key stage 4
 - teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Weaknesses in teaching over time mean that pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of key stage 4. This is especially true for the most able pupils and those pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders, including the newly appointed principal, have an honest and accurate view of the school's current provision. They are well aware of the past inadequacies in teaching and the legacy of underachievement that this has created for current pupils, especially those in key stage 4. Leaders have taken effective action to stem the school's decline and there are clear signs that teaching and pupils' achievement, especially in key stage 3, are improving convincingly.
- The impact of leaders' recent work indicates that there is proven capacity to turn the school around. For example, pupils in key stage 3 are making strong progress in English and mathematics, while pupils with low starting points are also making better progress across the school than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Furthermore, leaders' systems have been highly effective in reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school and a far greater proportion of pupils are moving on to further education and employment than was the case in the past. Nonetheless, these changes for the better have not been able to help older pupils to make up for lost learning in the past. As a result, too many pupils in key stage 4 continue to make inadequate progress over time.
- The principal and senior leaders, in partnership with the trust, share a common determination to improve the school and the life chances of the pupils in their care. Plans for improvement are appropriate and focused precisely on the school's most pressing issues.
- In the past, some leaders had an over-generous view of the quality of teaching. This is because they placed too much emphasis on the proportion of pupils attaining a GCSE at grade 4 or better in external examinations. Too little attention was given to pupils' progress from their starting points into key stage 3. This has contributed to the considerable underachievement of the most able pupils at key stage 4. The principal and other senior leaders now have a more accurate view of the quality of teaching across different subjects due to the effective systems in place to check on pupils' learning.
- Leaders have used additional funding effectively to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance and behaviour. There is also evidence to demonstrate that this funding is helping to ensure that disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 make secure progress from their starting points, especially in English and mathematics. However, during the last academic year, leaders' use of additional funding to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 was unsuccessful. Despite extensive help and support from staff, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in key stage 4 were too big to overcome. Wide differences remain in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 4.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance have taken steps to strengthen leadership at every level. For example, new subject leaders have been appointed in

English and mathematics. These subject leaders have already taken positive action that has led to improved teaching in these subjects, particularly in key stage 3.

- Staff report that the quality of the training that they have received has improved and is becoming more relevant and personalised. They appreciate the opportunity to learn from subject specialists in schools across the trust. Those teachers who are new to the profession feel well supported.
- Leaders have been successful in improving pupils' attendance. They have introduced rigorous and effective systems to ensure that attendance information is accurate. There are also robust procedures to check that the pupils who leave the school part-way through a key stage continue to receive an education.
- Leaders' systems to manage pupils' behaviour are having a positive effect. For instance, the proportion of pupils excluded has reduced dramatically. Nonetheless, some teachers do not apply the school's behaviour policies consistently, which has led to some low-level disruption during learning.
- Senior leaders have made changes to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. However, weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some subjects mean that many pupils in key stage 4 have been unable to benefit from these changes. Pupils benefit from a multitude of after-school clubs and the educational visits on offer. These have a positive effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils show respect for people of different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and religions. The school is highly inclusive, and diversity is celebrated. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding to ensure that most pupils with weaknesses in their literacy and numeracy skills can catch up. The support that these pupils receive to develop their literacy skills is particularly effective. Leaders use extra funding well to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. The use of funding to improve pupils' mathematical skills has been less effective.
- The leader of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that these pupils receive a wide range of additional support and that their progress is monitored closely. Teaching assistants benefit from relevant training. As a result, pupils with SEND, especially in key stage 3, benefit from more effective support and make stronger progress than they have in the past.
- Leaders have secured considerable improvements in the quality of the careers guidance that pupils receive. This has had a positive effect on increasing the proportion of pupils who go on to further education, employment or training.
- Following the closure of a nearby free school, staff have helped to successfully integrate a significant number of new pupils into the school. Strong pastoral provision means that new pupils settle quickly into the school's routines and expectations. This is demonstrated by the overall improvements in pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, trust leaders have acted to secure some improvements in the overall quality of education that pupils receive. For example, pupils at key stage 4 who left the school in 2017 made better progress than those pupils who left the year

before. However, the improvements in pupils' progress at key stage 4 were from an extremely low baseline. Those responsible for governance acknowledge that too many pupils who have left the school in recent years have underachieved significantly.

- More recently, trust representatives have increased the level of challenge and support that they provide to school leaders. For example, they have ensured that there is increased support to improve the quality of teaching in English. Senior and middle leadership has been strengthened across the school and there have been improvements in the quality of teaching across a number of subjects. Subject areas such as mathematics and science are now fully staffed. Nonetheless, for many pupils currently in key stage 4, this positive action is too late.
- Those responsible for governance are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The regional director holds the principal closely to account for the school's performance and keeps trustees well informed. The academy council is an advisory body. The chair of the academy council has a strong understanding of the school's context and the challenges that young people in the local area face.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are systems in place to make sure that adults who work at the school are safe to work with pupils.
- Staff receive information and training about the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date, so that they are aware of current safeguarding issues.
- Staff work to establish strong links with families and external agencies. They take timely and appropriate action if they have concerns about a pupil's well-being. Vulnerable pupils receive appropriate help and support.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know about the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse, as well as how to stay safe online. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- A legacy of weak teaching in some subjects, such as science, has resulted in pupils in key stage 4 having large gaps in their knowledge and skills. Some pupils have not covered the work that they should have in order to build their understanding of key concepts and ideas. As a result, teachers often have to go over old ground and re-visit work that should already be familiar to pupils. This slows down pupils' learning and has a negative impact on their progress over time.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to identify historic weaknesses in pupils' learning in key stage 4. Consequently, the work that teachers provide does not target gaps in pupils' learning with enough precision to enable them to overcome deficiencies in their knowledge and skills.
- More recently, leaders have secured increased stability in staffing arrangements. Leaders' increased expectations of teachers are matched by relevant subject-specific

training to help staff to improve their teaching skills. Younger pupils in key stage 3 are benefiting from these improvements. As a result, there have been improvements in the progress that pupils make in many subject areas lower down the school.

- Pupils' books show that there are times when teaching challenges pupils, and their work is sequenced effectively. As a result, pupils build on their prior learning, develop their understanding and apply their knowledge to more complex situations. Nonetheless, there are occasions where learning lacks challenge and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able pupils in key stage 4, are too low.
- Some teachers do not apply the school's literacy policy consistently. There are too many occasions when pupils' errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation go unchallenged. This means that pupils are unable to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum.
- There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are confident to ask their teachers for help if they fall behind in their learning. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to provide clear explanations and re-shape their questions. Most pupils want to do well. They value the help and support that they receive from their teachers.
- Overall, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour during learning. Consequently, most pupils follow teachers' instructions and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. However, work in pupils' books shows that some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. This is because some teachers do not insist on high standards of presentation.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Observations of learning during the inspection show that most pupils are confident and self-assured learners who want to do well.
- The '9 habits' of positive behaviour are at the centre of the school's work. Most pupils show respect for one another and their teachers. This is especially the case during learning, where most pupils listen politely to their peers' points of view.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of careers advice and guidance. There are strategies in place to identify those pupils who are at risk of not continuing on to further education, employment or training. These pupils benefit from additional support from staff. Pupils value the help they receive to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is a plethora of after-school clubs. These include sports activities, as well as sessions to promote pupils' theatrical and artistic talents. After-school clubs are well attended.

- Bullying is rare. The overwhelming majority of pupils, parents, carers and staff share this view. Pupils are confident that teachers will deal with any infrequent incidents of bullying effectively.
- Pupils learn about the negative consequences of racist and homophobic bullying through the personal, social and health (PSH) education curriculum. Pupils who are members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender communities feel that they can be open about their sexual identity. Pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds show respect and tolerance for each other.
- Through the PSH education curriculum, pupils learn how to look after their own physical and emotional health. The pastoral team ensures that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate help and support.
- Pupils who attend off-site provision are safe. Leaders check on these pupils' progress and attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- During the inspection, pupils moved around the school in a calm and orderly manner. However, those pupils who spoke with inspectors explained how a small proportion of pupils, at times, do not behave well on the corridors. Staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey share these concerns.
- Leaders' behaviour records show that pupils' behaviour is improving. Generally, during learning, pupils follow teachers' instructions and they are keen to answer questions. However, pupils and staff report that standards of behaviour fluctuate across subjects and year groups. There are still a small number of occasions when low-level disruption has a negative effect on learning.
- Overall, rates of attendance are improving towards the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is also decreasing. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Pupils and staff are confident that behaviour across the school is 'getting better'. This is illustrated by the fact that fewer pupils are excluded from school than at the time of the previous inspection. There has been a reduction in the number of behaviour incidents recorded by staff.
- Leaders check on the behaviour of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over time, pupils have underachieved significantly. Provisional information for 2018 shows that key stage 4 pupils made inadequate progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils made exceptionally poor progress.
- Too many pupils continue to underachieve in key stage 4. Pupils have too many gaps in their learning. This is especially the case in science, where pupils' progress has been in the bottom 10% nationally for the last three years. A legacy of weak teaching means

that pupils in key stage 4 do not have the scientific knowledge and skills to make the progress of which they are capable.

- The differences in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are not diminishing. For the last three years, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in English has been particularly weak. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in key stage 3 is improving. However, for many disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4, the extra help they receive from staff is insufficient to help them catch up. The progress made by the most able disadvantaged pupils at key stage 4 is especially poor.
- There have been considerable improvements in pupils' progress, particularly for lower ability and key stage 3 pupils. For example, pupils' progress in key stage 3 mathematics is improving quickly. Nonetheless, there is still variation in the progress that pupils in different year groups make over time and in different subjects.
- Following the improvements in the quality of teaching, the progress made by pupils with SEND is improving. Nonetheless, in key stage 4, some pupils with SEND are unable to make good progress from their starting points because they have too many gaps in their learning.
- Some pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their literacy through pieces of extended writing. For example, pupils in Year 8 develop their literacy skills in religious education. However, some teachers do not apply leaders' literacy policy consistently. This means that some pupils are unable to build on and develop their literacy skills.
- There have been considerable improvements in the proportion of pupils who go on to further education, employment or training. This is now broadly in line with the national average. Nonetheless, the inadequate progress that pupils make places a limit on their range of choices and preparedness for their next steps.

School details

Unique reference number	136027
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10045844

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,441
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Keith Dennis
Principal	Dominique Gobbi
Telephone number	0161 624 9630
Website	www.oasisacademyoldham.org
Email address	Debra.Martin@oasisoldham.org
Date of previous inspection	4–5 May 2016

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Oldham is part of the Oasis Community Learning (OCL) multi-academy trust. Under the model of governance across Oasis Community Learning's schools, the direct governance role is delegated to the appropriate regional director.
- The OCL board of trustees is the appropriate authority. The academy council acts in an advisory capacity and represents the views of the local community.
- Oasis Academy Oldham is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The school serves an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Pupils from 16 of the 17 different minority ethnic groups attend this school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is above the national average.

- A new principal was appointed in September 2018. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes to staffing. This includes new members of staff at both middle and senior leadership level.
- In 2017, a significant proportion of pupils joined the school across different year groups. This was to accommodate pupils following the closure of a nearby free school.
- The school uses the Kingsland Pupil Referral Unit as an alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across year groups and subjects. Some observations of learning by inspectors were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during social times and between lessons. Inspectors also spoke formally with five groups of pupils from different year groups.
- Inspectors considered 149 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. This included 27 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors took into account 70 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 66 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspection team considered a wide variety of documentation. This included: leaders' self-evaluation; leaders' own information about the progress of current pupils; information relating to pupils who have left the school part-way through a key stage; and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with: the principal; senior leaders; a group of subject leaders; a group of pastoral leaders; a group of teaching assistants; and a group of teachers new to the profession. They also spoke with other members of the school staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the academy council, a regional director and a national director from Oasis Community Learning.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Stephanie Gill	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
David Hampson	Ofsted 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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