

Oasis Academy Lords Hill

Romsey Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 8FA

Inspection dates

22-23 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good academy

- Under the dynamic leadership of the Principal, the academy is improving rapidly. He provides a strong direction for the academy and is ably assisted by a highly effective senior leadership team.
- From their starting points, pupils make good progress in their subjects as teachers motivate them to learn and succeed.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects and activities that make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Middle leaders are now a strength of the academy. They make a significant contribution to the improvements in the quality of education provided.
- Pupils who need extra support, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- The Academy Council and the Oasis Trust have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and areas that need improvement. They provide strong support for the academy leaders but also challenge them to improve the academy further.
- Pupils behave well around the academy. Most display positive attitudes to learning and clearly want to do well.

It is not yet an outstanding academy because

- The leadership of pupils' literacy development is not leading to strong promotion of better writing and speaking skills in some subjects.
- The more able, although making good progress, are not routinely challenged to reach the highest standards they are capable of.
- A small number of pupils do not attend regularly enough.

Full report

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and impact of the academy's work to promote literacy across the academy by:
 - clarifying the current roles and responsibilities of staff involved
 - making sure sufficient time is allocated to monitoring the impact of literacy work across the academy
 - ensuring that teaching in all subjects contribute effectively to the development pupils' writing skills
 - promoting pupils' speaking skills to encourage them to explain their ideas more fully and communicate really effectively

- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teaching matches the best currently evident in the academy
 - teachers deal promptly with ideas that pupils do not understand
 - the more able pupils are consistently challenged to enable them to make outstanding progress.

- Re-double the efforts to improve the low attendance of those children who are still persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The Principal has a passionate and professional commitment to improve the life chances of the pupils attending the academy. In this drive to make Oasis Academy Lords Hill successful, he is very ably supported by effective senior leaders who share his determined approach. They have made their high expectations to improve the overall quality of teaching very clear, so much so that, it is now good, and continues to improve. The very effective challenges set for leaders by the Academy Council has also played a part. Pupils are very aware of this drive by senior leaders with one older pupil commenting 'We all know what's expected of us and want to be successful.'
- Checking of the academy's work is based on the collection of a detailed range of information which focuses on specific areas of concern and other academy priorities. Findings are acted upon. Good practice is shared. Leaders have established effective systems to track the progress of all pupils. They know which pupils are making the progress they should and which are not. Systems to help pupils who have fallen behind are increasingly well targeted.
- Subject leaders are playing a more significant role in improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' standards. They know how to monitor pupils' progress information so that learning is improved and they help their colleagues to develop their teaching skills. This is notably the case in the leadership of English and mathematics, leading to a rise in pupils' attainment in these this year. Changes to the leadership of science are beginning to contribute to this improvement. However, the leadership of literacy across the school is not as effective as other developments. Monitoring arrangements do not give enough attention to ensuring that all subjects effectively promote pupils' speaking skills and the accuracy of their writing.
- The significant developments in the training given to teachers is another major reason for the better teaching in the academy. Senior leaders have also ensured that the agreed school priorities directly influence the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- The academy's leaders prioritise the support offered to pupils as they prepare to move to post-16 courses, employment and training. Careers interviews, fairs and visits to colleges and university all support pupils effectively as they make informed choices.
- The curriculum is designed effectively to meet pupils' needs and their personal development and prepare them for their future education, employment or training. While broadly academic in nature, the curriculum does cater for pupils for whom more vocational courses are appropriate. A particular strength is that many pupils participate in drama and music performances.
- The academy offers a good range of opportunities for pupils to acquire new knowledge, develop greater understanding and learn new skills. Similarly, it offers a wide range of enrichment activities, from music and pottery clubs to trips to the First World War battlefields, Portugal and Paris. Participation rates are high. Taken together, these curricular and extra-curricular opportunities have a very positive impact on pupils' progress and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The academy promotes fundamental British values through the curriculum, registration periods and assemblies. Inspectors attended a moving assembly where the Principal reminded pupils that despite acts of terrorism, 'our values of tolerance and seeing the best in people are more important than hatred'. Pupils were clear that they are helped to distinguish between right from wrong. The academy has growing success in its desire to build a cohesive community of staff and pupils who recognise the benefits of participating in all that the academy offers.
- Leaders carefully monitor the progress made by the very small number of academy pupils educated at The Compass School. Leaders receive regular updates to ensure that these pupils behaviour, progress and attendance is similar to other pupils.
- The impact of the academy's use of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is effective and improving. Additional teachers have been brought in to reduce class sizes and focus more strongly on the needs of these pupils as well as providing small-group teaching. The impact of this work is improving pupils' progress over time, particularly in Key Stage 3.
- **The governance of the academy**
 - The Academy Trust has held the Principal and other leaders to account for pupils' performance effectively. After the lower than expected GCSE results in 2015, with the support of Oasis Trust officers, the Academy Trust commissioned a detailed review through which they gained an even sharper perspective of what needed improving. The Academy Trust and Academy Council members are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the academy's work. Their responses to dealing

with previous weaknesses have made them a more effective group.

- Council members are demonstrably committed to the academy and securing the best for its pupils. They carry out their duty of oversight well and are clearly involved in setting the strategic direction of the academy and monitoring its progress. For example, the Council is closely involved in establishing the overall approach to the use of the pupil premium to help improve the life chances of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Council members are linked to academic subjects and pastoral year groups and visit the academy frequently to check that improvement priorities are acted upon quickly. Governors fulfil their responsibilities, such as for safeguarding, health and safety, special educational needs and finance, through increasingly challenging questions of senior leaders to hold them to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on teachers are carried out thoroughly and recorded appropriately, and staff are appropriately trained. Detailed policies and a cohesive staff team who speak to each other freely about any concerns or emerging issues enable the academy to make sure that pupils are kept safe. Issues and concerns receive prompt effective responses so that pupils can learn without any worries. Leaders work closely with several partners, external agencies and parents to ensure pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have worked effectively to improve teaching since the last inspection. Leaders' work to strengthen teaching this academic year has had a particularly positive impact. Leaders have made sure that teachers and teaching assistants have the training needed to teach and support learning consistently well. Teaching is increasingly good.
- Positive, harmonious relationships between staff and pupils make a direct contribution to pupils' learning and the good progress they make. The calm, purposeful environment seen in many lessons ensures that pupils work hard and enjoy their studies.
- Many pupils share their teachers' high aspirations. Pupils are given clear and concise explanations about what is required of them. They start work quickly with a good understanding of what has to be completed to achieve well in their work and in examinations. Teachers' subject knowledge is used effectively to increase pupils' knowledge in most subjects. Consequently, pupils are making good progress.
- Staff have a range of accurate information about pupils' prior knowledge and skills. They use this to set tasks to match pupils' needs and abilities well. Usually, work is checked well. Pupils are given appropriate support to 'clear up' misconceptions and are normally given greater challenge if the work is too easy for them. Occasionally, teachers are not quick enough to pick up misunderstandings in learning or to challenge the more able well enough to help them make really good progress.
- Teachers typically use questioning skilfully to search out what pupils understand and help them deepen their learning. For example, pupils in a Year 11 English class analysing a poem were asked probing questions by the teacher that encouraged them to consider all the issues at hand and gain a deeper grasp of the topic.
- In most lessons, teachers' make good use of pupils' responses to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the class. However, from time to time, superficial responses are accepted and pupils are not challenged well enough to develop a full understanding of what is being learned.
- Staff adhere to the academy's policy for assessment and this is supporting good learning. Pupils spoke positively about how the academy's policy of allowing them time to reflect upon and revisit work helped them to make progress. While virtually all teachers are now following this approach, there is a variation in the effectiveness with which it is used. In English, history, mathematics and performing arts subjects it is of high quality. However, on occasions, pupils are not making best use of advice given to them about how they might improve their work.
- The academy's approach to improving pupils' literacy is inconsistent. In some subjects, including history, geography, English and food technology, teachers ensure that errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are picked up and this has a positive impact on improving pupils' literacy skills. However, this is not consistent across all subjects and teachers are not routinely considering how to develop pupils' speaking skills to improve their spoken and written communication.
- Work to encourage pupils to read for pleasure is successful in improving their reading skills. The library has an improved range of fiction and information books, pupils spend more time in the library now than

was previously the case and many subjects use an increased range of challenging reading resources.

- Teaching assistants are managed effectively and work skilfully with pupils both inside and outside the classroom. Typically, they challenge and support pupils without doing the work for them, and support and encourage pupils to think deeply.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- The academy has a thorough and effective programme to promote pupils' personal development and welfare based on 'Nine Habits' including being compassionate, self-controlled and considerate. Those senior pupils who are prefects relish their role, working closely with pastoral staff and taking this responsibility very seriously.
- The academy cares very well for its pupils, and the pupils and parents recognise and value this. Pupils who join the academy after Year 7 are made to feel very welcome. Pupils speak highly of how teachers help them and the lengths to which they go to do so. As one parent told an inspector, 'there have been many teachers who went beyond what they normally do to support and encourage my son when he found things very difficult'. The large minority of pupils with additional needs and vulnerabilities have personalised programmes to support them well. One pupil remarked, 'I wouldn't have survived in the academy if it wasn't for the help I've received. It's been great!'
- The academy provides good quality careers information, advice and guidance. This is highly valued by pupils, particularly those in Year 11 who feel very well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. The number of pupils who do not go on to sustained education, employment or training is reducing well. This is a testament to the success of the academy's work in this area.
- Pupils feel very safe in the academy, and are well aware of potential risks, for example, how to keep themselves safe on the internet. They say that there is little or no bullying but are confident that if it were to occur that the academy would deal with it quickly and effectively. Parents and staff both state that pupils are safe in the academy.
- The academy works very effectively with a wide range of external agencies to support the 'World Studies' curriculum. For example, inspectors observed some Year 11 pupils thoughtfully preparing topics to teach 'micro lessons' of ten minutes to Year 8 pupils in the sex and relationship education programme.
- Most pupils are mature and self-confident learners who want to do as well as they can. They rise to the challenge of good teaching and even when teaching is less than inspiring, most of them continue to display positive attitudes to learning. Pupils take pride in their work and the academy's walls are covered in fine examples of this, especially pupils' art work. Equally, standards of presentation in pupils' books are usually secure.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave thoughtfully in lessons and around the academy, often being very supportive of their friends if they feel uncomfortable about any issues.
- A very large majority of pupils concentrate well in lessons, knowing what is expected of them in learning and their attitudes. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved, over time, and it is now good. Inspectors saw barely any disruptive behaviour.
- Adults speak to pupils calmly and instil and expect good behaviour. Pupils learn that teachers will remain calm and show that any issue can be better resolved without commotion or confrontation. As a result, disruption of learning through inappropriate behaviour is uncommon. Just occasionally, some disruption is evident when teaching is not so strong.
- The academy has raised its expectations of how pupils should behave. This has resulted in improvements in behaviour overall and a reduction in exclusions. Last year there were only two fixed term exclusions, a big reduction from the previous year. Equally, the effective use of room 'G4' for internal exclusion is understood by pupils as a supportive option to help 'change people for the better'. As one student said, 'incidents of racist, homophobic and sexist behaviour are much rarer now'.
- Attendance across the academy has improved well, including for those in alternative provision, and is now close to the national average. Leaders tackle persistent attendance well on a case-by-case basis

which has made a positive impact on improving pupils' attendance. The gaps in attendance amongst different groups of pupils is closing, even though a stubborn group of poor attenders remains.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils in all years are typically making good progress in virtually all subjects, including English and mathematics where more pupils than in recent years are making better than expected progress. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 3.
- Pupils join the academy in Year 7 with significantly lower than average standards in English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4 has improved but remained below average. Overall achievement in science and languages by the end of Key Stage 4 has also remained low. Academy records show that overall standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are on track to be higher than in previous years.
- In 2015 the proportion of pupils making expected progress and more than expected progress in English and mathematics from high and low starting points was in line with that seen nationally by the end of Key Stage 4. The same was the case for those with middle starting points in English but virtually no pupils with middle starting points made strong progress in mathematics.
- In 2015, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' average progress across subjects was in line with that seen nationally. However, the progress of more-able pupils was below the national figure. The current progress of the more able pupils in the academy is better. However, teachers do not routinely set tasks that challenge these pupils to reach the highest standards they are capable of.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving and many are now making progress that is the same as or faster than that of other pupils, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities as well as those for whom English is an additional language, continue to make good progress. This is because the special educational needs team has a clear understanding of the needs of individual pupils and well-targeted support is in place.
- Many pupils join the academy with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are well below those expected for their age. These pupils receive extra help through the Year 7 catch-up funding and this is helping them to build up those skills and improve their progress, especially with their reading. However, neither pupils' writing nor speaking and listening skills are as well developed in subjects other than English and mathematics. This limits the impact of the academy's plans to improve literacy skills rapidly.

Academy details

Unique reference number	135628
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection Number	10002320

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

Type of Academy	Secondary
Academy category	Sponsor-led Academy
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the academy roll	501
Appropriate authority	The Academy Council
Chair	Peter Goodall
Principal	Ian Golding
Telephone number	02380 393660
Website	www.oasisacademylordshill.org
Email address	info@oasislordshill.org
Date of previous inspection	7-8 November 2013

Information about this academy

- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary academy.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is almost twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free academy meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The academy has been undersubscribed and as a consequence a significant number of its pupils join at times other than at the start of Year 7. By the time a cohort reaches Year 11, as many as one in six pupils will have joined in this manner.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities is well above the national average.
- The academy meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The academy uses one alternative provider, The Compass School, for a very small number of pupils.
- The academy is sponsored by Oasis Community Learning, part of the Oasis global family.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 part lessons, of which a number were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During lesson observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of current work. Inspectors also attended an assembly and undertook a number of shorter visits to lessons to gauge the climate for learning and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised in detail samples of pupils' work across many subjects and all years.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during break and lunchtimes, and during the transitions between lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy. Also, throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning and safety.
- Several meetings were held with the Principal, other senior leaders and a group of middle leaders. An inspector held meetings with the three members of the Academy Board and the sponsor's regional director.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents including academy policies, assessment information, records of checks on the quality of teaching, the academy's own self-evaluation and its plans for improvement. The minutes of Academy Council meetings and a range of safeguarding information were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of the academy's own surveys of parents' opinions. Inspectors considered 51 questionnaires completed by staff and one response to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Hugh Betterton, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Hoather	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Watkiss	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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