

Oasis Academy Mayfield

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135629
Local Authority	NA
Inspection number	361461
Inspection dates	1 and 7 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline White HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	786
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Billy Kennedy
Principal	John Toland
Date of previous school inspection	NA
School address	Porchester Road Woolston Southampton SO19 2JD
Telephone number	02380 328128
Fax number	02380 328228
Email address	principalPA@oasismayfield.org

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 36 lessons and 30 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing academy council, the senior and middle leadership team and groups of students. They looked at the academy's data on students' performance, records of the support provided to them and their progress. The inspection team received and analysed 53 questionnaires from parents and carers, 157 responses to a survey of students and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised the academy's improvement plans, policies and procedures, including health and safety and risk assessments.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality and capacity of leadership at all levels
- the quality of teaching and learning in a range of different subjects
- how effectively the academy promotes good behaviour and attendance.

Information about the school

This average-sized academy, specialising in global communication, opened in September 2008. It operates on two sites and replaced a boys' school and a co-educational school in the locality. The academy is sponsored by Oasis Community Learning. Most students are of White British heritage with approximately 8% from minority ethnic groups. There are far more boys than girls and the imbalance is most pronounced in Key Stage 4. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is low. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The number of students eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The academy holds the bronze Eco-Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) 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 in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' achievement. The academy has faced considerable challenges in bringing together two school communities, stabilising staffing and establishing its own ethos. Ground has been gained and some improvements have been secured. Many students acknowledge this. However, attainment is low and declined further in 2010.

The academy is demonstrating satisfactory and strengthening capacity for improvement. Importantly, comprehensive strategies to improve students' attendance have been successful in lifting attendance from well-below average to average, and more systematic and rigorous monitoring of students' progress has resulted in most students now making satisfactory progress. These advances are built on effective self-evaluation focused on delivering better outcomes for students. The Principal and the governing academy council provide clear leadership and are resolute in tackling underperformance.

While teaching is satisfactory overall, it is of variable quality. There is good and outstanding practice that is not shared effectively across the academy. Not all teachers use assessment information well, so challenge in lessons is inconsistent. Opportunities to secure good progress and recover low attainment are missed too often. Hence, the academy is reliant on intervention strategies in Key Stage 4 to close gaps in students' skills and understanding. Activities are sometimes too teacher-led and methods do not always give students the confidence to try things out for themselves. The quality of marking and verbal feedback varies particularly in pinpointing how students could improve their work.

In some subjects, students have individual, curricular targets that clarify where they are in their learning and what they must improve. This practice is not embedded across the curriculum. Consequently, there are areas where students are unsure of the level they are working at and the next step in their learning. Improvements to the curriculum, and better guidance, are resulting in a closer match between students' interests and aptitudes and provision. The academy has good plans to promote its specialism in global communication but implementation is at an early stage and impact on students' achievement is limited.

The academy has employed a range of effective methods to improve behaviour and

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these are coming to fruition. Systems establish a strong link between constructive attitudes and effective learning. Behaviour is satisfactory and generally positive relationships are increasing students' enjoyment of learning. Better care and support are also deepening their allegiance to the academy and their sense of belonging.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement by reducing variation in the quality of teaching and learning through:
 - embedding systems for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning across the curriculum
 - fully implementing the recently introduced marking policy
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment information well to plan and deliver lessons that challenge students appropriately and accelerate their progress
 - developing students' independence and capacity to take responsibility for their learning
 - ensuring all students have subject-specific targets that help them to understand how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Provisional results in 2010 show a decline in attainment and the proportion of students gaining five or more higher-grade GCSEs including English and mathematics. Most students join the academy with broadly average attainment but in the last two years attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been significantly below average and progress has been inadequate. While learning and progress are now satisfactory for all groups of students, including those eligible for free school meals, those from minority ethnic groups and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, there are not enough lessons where students make the good progress required to secure higher attainment. Students with learning difficulties are making better progress because more detailed analysis and understanding of their needs shapes provision.

In the lessons observed by inspectors, not all teachers were sufficiently focused on evaluating students' learning through, for example, the effective use of questioning and end of lesson summaries. Not enough emphasis was given to learning styles that promote independence and too frequently students were passive rather than active participants in lessons. However, a growing number of students think the academy is improving and 'lessons are better'. They feel more valued as individuals and appreciate the increased continuity in staffing and the consequent, supportive relationships that have developed. Most feel safe. Students are more willing to take up the expanding opportunities to participate in and contribute to academy life. Many have taken part in community projects. For instance, the 'Silver Surfers' programme brought together students and older members of the local community to improve their information and communication technology skills. Students' workplace

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skills and future economic well-being are supported by comprehensive intervention programmes to boost basic skills and prepare them for the world of work. Work experience placements that are being extended through vocational courses have greatly improved attendance. Students know right from wrong and are aware of the consequences of their actions. Their social skills are developing as support for them becomes more personalised. Students' satisfactory understanding of cultural and religious diversity is being broadened through the development of schemes of work across the curriculum designed to extend their horizons. The academy's specialism in global communication is making an effective contribution to this work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations that require students to think for themselves and take responsibility for their learning. These teachers use their good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning to plan and deliver lessons that challenge and engage them. They have good subject knowledge and evaluate learning throughout the lessons, tackling gaps and misconceptions skilfully. Success criteria are clear and shared with students who are encouraged and supported in using them to assess their own and others' work. For example, in one of the lessons observed, students were using examination grade descriptors to identify weaknesses in their written work and set themselves targets for improvement. Formative marking identifies the next learning step for students

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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and relates to longer term subject-specific targets for improvement. These strengths in teaching and learning are only just beginning to be shared, and, overall, the proportion of lessons in which students make good progress is too low. Too much teaching fails to command students' engagement and build on their prior learning systematically.

The curriculum has been reviewed. Recent developments have created a balance between vocational and academic courses that meets students' needs more successfully. A wider range of visits, clubs and activities is increasing participation rates. A well-organised breakfast club contributes to students' sense of being valued.

Effectively tailored care and support for individuals and groups of students is an underlying factor in the recent improvements in students' progress and well-being. Support for the high proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is better targeted as a result of regular reviews and improved liaison between teachers. Students are making better-informed choices about their future because of the improved guidance they now receive.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Variation in the quality of leadership at senior and middle levels is being tackled robustly. Recent additions to the senior leadership team have increased its capacity to be strategic. Well-targeted support and strengthened line management are improving middle leadership and making staff accountable for students' progress. Systems for monitoring and evaluation, particularly in relation to students' attendance and progress, and the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. More thorough moderation and data analysis underpin the growing accuracy of teacher assessment. The Principal and the academy council are acutely aware of the imperative to improve outcomes for students. They are working cohesively and with increasing impact to raise students' achievement. Partnerships with other agencies and providers are becoming established and making a stronger contribution to the improvement of the academy.

A clear vision and overarching strategic objectives give coherence to whole-school and team improvement plans. Regular opportunities for professional development are aligned to improvement priorities but also tailored to the needs of individuals.

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Systems for performance management are tied directly to improving outcomes for students.

Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, meet all requirements and safe working is evident in daily routines. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted and discrimination is not tolerated. Improved systems for tracking students' progress support detailed examination of the performance of different groups and individuals. The academy has a good understanding of its local context. An audit of local needs has shaped the wide range of community links that contribute to cohesion within and beyond the academy. Strategies for evaluating the extent of their impact are at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires and this is a lower than average return rate. Views about the work of the academy were divided with some parents and carers recognising improvements and others expressing concerns about leadership and management, communications and students' behaviour and progress. Inspectors found the quality of leadership at all levels to be variable but satisfactory overall. Students' behaviour and current progress were satisfactory. There was also evidence of more regular and effective communications with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oasis Academy Mayfield to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 786 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	13	27	51	12	23	5	9
The school keeps my child safe	5	9	37	70	6	11	4	8
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	11	27	51	13	25	6	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	9	24	45	13	25	9	17
The teaching is good at this school	3	6	29	55	11	21	6	11
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	6	22	42	13	25	9	17
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	2	29	55	13	25	5	9
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	11	21	40	12	23	3	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	8	25	47	15	28	7	13
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	6	26	49	8	15	12	23
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	6	22	42	14	26	9	17
The school is led and managed effectively	8	15	21	40	9	17	12	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	17	19	36	12	2	12	23

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Oasis Academy Mayfield, Woolston SO19 2JD

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited. We appreciated your willingness to talk openly about your work and life at the academy.

Although most of you are now making satisfactory progress, low attainment and inadequate progress in the recent past mean that your achievement overall is not as good as it should be. Therefore, we have given the academy a 'notice to improve' this situation as quickly as possible and in six to eight months time, an inspector will return to check progress.

There are already encouraging signs that aspects of the academy's work are strengthening. Your behaviour is satisfactory and your attendance has improved markedly and is now in line with the national average. Relationships are generally positive and you told us that you are enjoying lessons more. Most of you feel safe and valued as individuals. The curriculum has been developed; it is satisfactory and increasingly tailored to your needs. You are also taking advantage of a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

Senior leaders are doing the right things to build on these improvements. We have asked them to focus on a number of strategies to reduce variation in the quality of teaching and learning so that your progress in lessons speeds up and your achievement rises. You can all help by improving your attendance and attitudes to learning further. Your willingness to take more responsibility for your learning is one of the keys to future success.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline White
Her Majesty's Inspector

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