

Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

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

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and trustees have not yet improved the standard of education so that it is good. Improvements have been made in behaviour and teaching, but these have not been substantial enough.
- In 2018, pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, did not make enough progress across a range of subjects. Current pupils are making better progress, particularly in mathematics and wider curriculum subjects.
- Teaching is inconsistent. In too many lessons, teachers' planning does not meet pupils' needs well enough. Most-able pupils, in particular, are not challenged enough in lessons.
- Leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment sharply enough.
- Although attendance is improving for some pupils, persistent absence is too high and overall attendance is too low.
- Some pupils disrupt learning with low-level misbehaviour. Behaviour strategies are reducing these incidents. However, in some lessons, pupils' behaviour is not good enough.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. Many pupils lack enthusiasm in lessons and do not work hard enough.
- Teachers do not use the school's assessment policy well enough to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not coordinated well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal is supported well by the trust and by capable senior and middle leaders. Together, they are steadfast in laying sound foundations for further school improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have a wide choice of varied subjects to study in key stage 4.
- Safeguarding is effective. There is a strong safeguarding culture in school. Staff are well trained in spotting the risks pupils may face.
- In the sixth form, teachers have strong subject knowledge and they know their students well. Pupils behave well and make good progress in a varied range of courses.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment so that teaching improves and pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, make stronger progress across all subjects
 - improving the coordination of the school's provision for pupils with SEND so that they receive more effective support and make better progress.
- Increase the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils
 - improving the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers adhere to the school's assessment policy so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - further reducing incidents of uncooperative behaviour in lessons
 - increasing the effectiveness of attendance strategies so that persistent absence reduces, and attendance improves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since her appointment, the principal has identified correctly the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has a deep understanding of the challenges the school faces. Notably, high pupil mobility, very low pupil attainment on entry to the school in Year 7, and high levels of deprivation in parts of the local area pose potential barriers to success.
- Over the past five years, leaders and the Oasis Community Learning (OCL) multi-academy trust have not been successful in ensuring that pupils received a good standard of education. However, the principal, with the support of the trust, has provided a new momentum to the school's plans for improvement. Although overall effectiveness is not yet good, improvements have been made in increasing the accountability of staff, pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching and in outcomes, particularly during the past year.
- Leaders are not fully aware of the effectiveness of the policies they have put in place because their monitoring is not sharp enough. For example, leaders were not aware of the weaknesses in the application of the school's assessment policy and the lack of feedback that pupils receive in some subjects.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is not planned well enough. In lessons, some pupils with SEND do not receive the help and support they need because teachers are not aware of what works well with these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. In key stage 3, pupils study a wide range of subjects. As pupils move into key stage 4, they choose from a rich selection of GCSE and BTEC qualifications. Notably, pupils choose from a selection of vocational subjects such as motor vehicle, construction and hair and beauty. Currently, however, only small proportions of pupils choose to study languages. Leaders have a strategy in place to address this and are committed to more pupils studying languages in the future.
- Leaders have introduced increasingly effective behaviour strategies that have reduced fixed-term exclusions and improved pupils' conduct in lessons and around school. As a result, on the whole, lessons are calm and purposeful, and current pupils make increasingly strong progress because they can concentrate in lessons.
- Staff told inspectors that standards in school had improved since the last inspection, particularly in regard to pupils' behaviour and the accountability of staff. Almost two thirds of staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire agreed that the school was well led and managed.
- Leaders are committed, enthusiastic and ambitious for pupils. They accept that there is some way to go before standards are securely good. However, they have prioritised raising standards in behaviour and ensuring that pupils receive high-quality care and support from staff.
- Attendance of parents and carers at school events has increased over the past two years. Leaders are aware that some parents have a negative view of the school. However, the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire,

Parent View, responded positively about the leadership of the school and were pleased with the care and support that pupils received. Of the parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, 83% agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the school to others.

- Extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is being increasingly well spent. Disadvantaged pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects is not yet good. However, these pupils develop well in terms of their personal development because extra funding is used to ensure that they do not miss out on enrichment opportunities.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school's personal, social, health and economic programme delivers key messages to pupils and supports them in reflecting on issues such as illegal drug use, personal hygiene and healthy living.

Governance of the school

- Professional governance is carried out by the OCL regional director on behalf of the trust board. The Academy Council (AC) provides support to the regional director in his governance responsibilities by providing local governance. The AC oversees relations with the local community and devises projects with the aim of forging stronger community links.
- The regional director has worked with leaders to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In regular meetings, he challenges leaders on the effectiveness of their actions and has been instrumental in ensuring that the school's leadership structure is more stable. The regional director has organised professional support from an array of areas. For example, the principal of an OCL school provided leadership support and teachers from another OCL school have been deployed to provide high-quality training for teachers.
- Trustees are committed to school improvement and have deployed significant financial support to the school to ensure that leaders are well supported.
- AC members are very committed and involved in raising aspirations for pupils, raising the profile of the local area and improving the personal development of pupils. They have put in place several projects that have impacted on a large proportion of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Procedures for ensuring that staff receive the appropriate employability checks are rigorous and detailed.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Personal, social, health and economic education teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe online and in social situations. Pupils develop a strong understanding of how to manage risks. For example, Year 10 pupils developed their appreciation of the dangers of binge drinking by discussing examples of the associated reckless behaviour.

- Staff receive up-to-date training so that they can effectively fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand how to report concerns they have about pupils. Reported concerns are followed up quickly so that pupils who need help receive it.
- Staff work well with external agencies. They are quick to refer pupils who need extra support and ensure that follow up activities are monitored well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent across subjects and year groups. Teachers do not plan activities well enough so that they meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils often lose interest in activities and do not develop their knowledge and understanding well enough.
- In too many lessons, tasks are not challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Sometimes, these pupils finish activities quickly and have to wait for the next task, without having anything else to do. Consequently, pupils do not make strong progress across subjects.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers use what they know about each pupil's progress effectively to plan interesting activities. For example, teachers in English showed pupils examples of high-quality extended writing. Consequently, pupils enriched their vocabularies.
- Stronger teaching practice is becoming increasingly widespread because of leaders' focus on improving behaviour and teaching strategies. Consequently, pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils, are making better progress in some subjects such as English, science, construction and physical education.
- Overall, teachers' use of questioning is variable across subjects. Some teachers use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding and further develop their knowledge. However, in some subjects, pupils are not encouraged to think deeply about topics and concepts because teachers' questioning is superficial.
- The school's assessment policy is currently under review and new ways of using assessment are being tried out in a small number of subjects. Over time, the current assessment policy has not been consistently applied. Some teachers provide effective feedback to pupils and this helps them to identify their mistakes. However, this is not consistent across subjects.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support. They help pupils with SEND understand what they need to do in lessons. However, the school's approach to targeting additional help for pupils with SEND needs to be further refined. Some pupils do not always get the help they need from teachers or teaching assistants.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. Some pupils work enthusiastically, while others are reluctant to work hard. Too many pupils present their work poorly in their books and have a lacklustre attitude towards their studies.
- Pupils feel well cared for by committed staff. There are strong relationships between pastoral staff and pupils, and pupils know who to go to if they need support. However, relationships between teachers and pupils are not as strong.
- Many pupils benefit from the school's personal development curriculum. They relish the opportunities to become involved in work with charities and this helps them to develop their understanding of, and empathy for, others. For example, pupils have developed a 'dementia café' where they can support and socialise with members of local care homes and residents. The school has won national awards for this work.
- Pupils have a developing sense of their social responsibilities. For example, assemblies on the use of plastic bags and bottles made pupils think about using alternatives to plastic water bottles.
- Careers education is strong. Pupils experience a range of opportunities to learn about possible future employment, education or training. Careers advisers provide independent advice and are available to pupils when they have to make decisions about their future paths.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well in lessons. They follow teachers' instructions and work cooperatively with their peers. In the past year, in particular, effective strategies to improve behaviour have been put in place. These are reducing incidents of poor behaviour. However, there is still a minority of pupils who disrupt lessons with low-level misbehaviour.
- Pupils' conduct around school is generally positive. The school is an orderly environment and pupils are well supervised. For example, pupils line up sensibly at the start of the school day so that staff can monitor uniform and conduct.
- Some pupils wear their uniform smartly and staff regularly ask pupils to dress appropriately. However, some pupils do not wear correct uniform.
- A high-profile strategy to improve pupils' attendance has ensured that some vulnerable pupils now attend more regularly. Staff follow systematic attendance procedures so that the parents of pupils who are absent are contacted immediately when their child is absent. Rewards for attendance are employed and this encourages some pupils to attend regularly. Nevertheless, too many pupils are persistently absent, and pupils' attendance is too low.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been well above the national averages for secondary schools over the past three years. However, recent changes to the support available for vulnerable pupils have led to a reduction in fixed-term exclusions.
- Those pupils who attend off-site alternative provision receive appropriate care and support from staff. Their personal development and attendance have improved because the curriculum meets their needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, Year 11 pupils underachieved in many subjects, and particularly in English, mathematics and science. Disadvantaged pupils made weak progress across a range of subjects. In vocational subjects, pupils made better progress from their starting points.
- Increasingly effective behaviour strategies and improved teaching in some subjects have meant that current pupils are making increasingly strong progress in mathematics and wider curriculum subjects, particularly in key stage 3. Pupils are catching up and making better progress because, generally, lessons are calm and purposeful.
- Pupils who attend 'the bridge', the school's provision for vulnerable pupils who struggle with attending mainstream lessons, have improved their attendance and progress because of the well-organised curriculum and high-quality support from staff.
- Work in books shows that, in several subjects, such as English, mathematics, science and business studies, the quality of pupils' work is improving. For example, in Year 10, pupils arrange their work systematically so that they can improve their understanding of concepts over time. However, these improvements are not consistent across subjects.
- The proportions of pupils leaving Year 11 to go on to education, employment and training have been increasing steadily over the past three years. Current Year 11 pupils are better prepared for their next stages compared to last year's cohort of Year 11 pupils and more have secured appropriate next steps.
- The small proportion of pupils who attend off-site alternative provision have improved their attendance and attitude towards their studies because of the effective support they receive.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students' progress at the end of key stage 5, in 2018, was broadly average in applied general courses and above average in A-level courses. Current students are making good progress in all subjects because teaching is stronger than in the rest of the school.
- Teachers in the sixth form know their students well and have good subject knowledge. They plan well-structured activities that both challenge pupils and ensure that they understand complex ideas and concepts. For example, in psychology, students used subject-specific vocabulary to describe evolutionary principles of development.
- Leaders have ensured that the 16 to 19 study programmes offer a wide range of courses at different levels for students. Vocational courses are becoming steadily more popular with students compared to A levels.
- Teachers assess what students know and understand well. They give incisive feedback to students. This helps students to deepen their understanding of subject concepts. For example, in musical theatre challenging feedback was used immediately to enhance students' performances.

- Careers education is effective in supporting students to make the choices that are right for them when they leave sixth form. Impartial advice ensures that very few students do not go into education, employment or training after Year 13.
- Students conduct themselves well in the sixth form. They set positive behaviour examples for pupils. Students' attendance has increased this year. However, students do not attend as regularly as they should.
- The proportion of students who retook English and mathematics GCSE in 2018 and improved their grade was below the national average. Current students are making better progress this year.

School details

Unique reference number	135721
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088158

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

Type of school	Secondary Modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,416
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	127
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Keith Dennis
Principal	Tina Lee
Telephone number	01795 873 591
Website	www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org
Email address	office@oasisisleofsheppey.org
Date of previous inspection	1–2 March 2017

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey is a member of the Oasis Community Learning multi-academy trust. The board of trustees is the accountable body for the school. The trust has worked with school leaders to provide strategic direction in order to improve the school.
- Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average for secondary schools.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average for secondary schools.
- Off-site provision at Gillingham Football Club and Alchemy School is used by the school for a small proportion of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons across all year groups. In several observations, senior leaders joined inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the regional director, senior leaders, trustees and members of the academy council.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils from key stages 3 and 4.
- The views of 39 pupils and students from Ofsted’s questionnaire were considered. Inspectors also spoke to a wide range of pupils and students during social times and during lessons.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ and students’ work and observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the responses of the 86 staff to the confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of 348 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire, including 47 free-text responses.
- Inspectors contacted the off-site provisions used by the school.
- Documentation scrutinised by inspectors included the school’s plans for improvement, self-evaluation, reports on attendance and behaviour, records relating to pupils’ safety, minutes of trustees’ meetings, and information on pupils’ outcomes.

Inspection team

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Peter Rodin	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Murphy	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Strong	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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