

Oasis Academy Coulsdon

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135654
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	363002
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria 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	557
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Fuller
Headteacher	Mr David Millar
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 30 lessons and observed 28 teachers. Meetings were held with the Principal, other nominated staff, groups of students, and the Chair of the Governing Body who is also the representative of the sponsors. Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised documents, including the academy's self-evaluation, assessment information, records of lesson observations and safeguarding arrangements. In addition, 191 questionnaires from parents and carers and those returned by students and staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do outcomes for students endorse the academy's self-evaluation?
- Are the systems for tracking and reviewing students' progress ensuring that students achieve challenging targets in both key stages?
- Is the inclusion of all learners central to the academy's vision, and are leaders at all levels effective in overcoming barriers to engagement and on improving outcomes for students?

Information about the school

Oasis Academy Coulsdon opened in September 2008, initially as an 11–16 academy. It is housed in the same accommodation as its predecessor school. A rebuilt and refurbished building, including a new post-16 centre designed to cater for 250 students, is planned to open in September 2011. The academy has subject specialisms in science and technology with business and enterprise.

The academy accepts students of all abilities. It is smaller than the average secondary school and most of its students come from the local area. Over half of the students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Some of these students are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion that have special educational needs and/or disabilities relating mainly to their learning or behaviour. The academy was awarded National Healthy Schools status in January 2009.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Oasis Academy Coulsdon is providing its students with a good quality of education. The Principal leads the academy with enthusiasm, dedication and a clear commitment to improvement, especially in relation to the progress students make. A strong community spirit is apparent in this inclusive, cohesive academy. Strong systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the academy are in place with the result that senior staff have a good understanding of its relative strengths and weaknesses. All staff are held firmly accountable for the achievement of the students. There are some very effective middle leaders who, through rigorous and precise evaluation, are raising standards – as exemplified by the English and science leaders. However, not all middle leaders are equally effective. The governing body is committed and supportive. It has been actively involved in the planning for academy improvement as well as its strategic development.

Students enter the academy with attainment that is well below the national average. They leave Year 11 with average attainment. Attainment is rising steadily, but inconsistently across subjects – particularly mathematics. During their time in the academy, the majority of students make good progress. Current assessment information for Year 11 indicates that the percentage of students on course to achieve five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, will rise sharply in 2011 and is likely to be close to the national average.

Students' progress is good because of the good teaching they receive. Typically, lessons are well planned, and engaging activities ensure that most students are motivated. Students value the support they receive from their teachers, particularly the extra opportunities that are provided outside normal lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have high expectations of the standards that students should reach. Occasionally, in a few lessons observed, activities were given too much time and the pace of learning then slowed. In some classes, teachers' expectations of how students' written work should be presented and marked are not high enough. The best practice in teaching and learning is not fully shared across the academy.

The curriculum is increasingly personalised across Key Stage 4 with a good range of vocational options available. At Key Stage 3, specialist staff deliver the core curriculum to a transition group of Year 7 and Year 8 students, boosting students' foundation skills and confidence. The curriculum reflects the academy's specialisms. However, the senior leaders are acutely aware that the overall impact of the specialisms on enhancing the whole curriculum is yet to be realised.

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Students feel safe because there are good procedures and practices to help ensure this. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is promoted well in religious education lessons and assemblies. Attendance, in particular levels of persistent absence, remains a high priority for the academy. It is currently average. Almost all aspects of personal development are good because the care, guidance and support students receive are good, and clear procedures help ensure students make well-informed choices about their future lives. Students speak very highly of the academy; they value their academy community as one student commented, 'They never give up on us.' They very willingly take on responsibility, for example in supervising younger students, running homework clubs and contributing to the design of the new building. They make an outstanding contribution to the wider community through raising money for a number of charities, organising business breakfast for local companies, hosting an annual silver service dinner event for the local Rotary Club and preparing and serving food, fortnightly, at a local residential home for the elderly. The academy is a caring environment in which students develop a clear sense of values and their behaviour is good. Rising standards of attainment, regular monitoring and evaluation of professional practice and good opportunities for professional enrichment contribute to the academy's good capacity to make and sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - using the academy's most effective and dynamic practitioners to raise the overall levels of teaching and learning
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides students with clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Develop middle leaders' consistency and effectiveness in raising standards.
- Improve rates of attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C rose from 63% in 2009 to 82% in 2010 to be above the national average. Particularly noteworthy was the improvement in English and science. The percentage of students achieving five of these grades, including English and mathematics, declined from 44% to 37%. This in the main was due to disappointing mathematics results. Senior leaders have taken action to improve and secure leadership and management in this subject. The academy has effective procedures and systems and teachers closely monitor students' progress. Based on this information, the academy is able to ensure that intervention strategies to give additional help to those students in need of additional support are timely and well matched to their learning needs. All groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities, make good

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progress.

Students respond with enthusiasm and growing confidence. Well-planned lessons in drama also give students the chance to shine; here they show their ability to work in teams and cooperate and are willing to evaluate their performance and improve their work. Students enjoy being at the academy and feel very safe. They say there are very few instances of bullying but should any occur they are confident they will be dealt with immediately and effectively. Older students also offer their services as 'buddies' and younger students feel reassured by their presence. Students develop healthy lifestyles by selecting from a range of healthy options at lunchtime and taking frequent exercise. Students are well prepared for the next stages of their lives by their increasing capacity for teamwork and, from Year 10 onwards, their good progress in learning related to the world of work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2

How effective is the provision?

A very positive feature of the teaching and learning is the good relationships that are apparent between teachers and students. In the best lessons, positive relationships result in students feeling encouraged to take risks, exploring new ideas and concepts with confidence and reaching in higher levels of understanding. Tasks are well matched to students' needs and precise questioning is used to challenge students' thinking and check their understanding. Opportunities for students to discuss their work in pairs and groups are also evident and as a result, students make rapid gains in their learning. Conversely, some of the satisfactory lessons are characterised by

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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work that is undemanding and not well suited to students' varying abilities, with few opportunities for them to share their understanding with other students and the teacher to help them improve their work. The standard of marking in several departments is exemplary. This practice is not consistent throughout the school. For example, students are not always challenged about the poor standard of presentation of their written work.

Central to the successful improvements in students' progress and attitudes to the academy is the good curriculum, which is well suited to students' needs and interests. There is a wide range of vocational courses provided both within the academy and in collaboration with local colleges. For example, those at risk of not gaining five GCSE A* to C grades are given the opportunity to gain additional qualifications in 'Vision2Learn', 'Nutrition' and 'Equality and Diversity' courses.

The academy takes its duty of care very seriously and students are well known to staff. Students with additional learning or pastoral needs and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are supported effectively by pastoral and support staff. The academy works well with a wide range of outside agencies. Provision ensures that students receive personalised attention, supporting both their well-being, and their academic and personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear vision for future development of the academy that is shared by the governing body, the Principal, senior staff and other leaders and managers. The Principal provides a strong lead in implementing the carefully designed plans that underpin the shared vision while also taking a direct interest in the learning of individual students and supporting a wide range of academy events. His commitment is recognised and valued by staff and students. The plans for the new building have been carefully and thoughtfully managed to ensure the involvement and safety of the academy's community. The Principal delegates responsibilities extremely well. His highly successful style of management has drawn together a team of committed staff who feel empowered to make improvements to the quality of provision. The academy is developing the role of the middle managers in contributing to improvement; some are now very skilled in this, however, senior leaders acknowledge there is more to do in ensuring that all managers are equally skilled and best practice in teaching and learning is fully shared.

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The governing body plays a prominent role in shaping the academy's direction and holding it to account for its performance. Supported by external reviews, the academy's self-evaluation is robust and the priorities for action, and individual roles and responsibilities for timely achievement of success of these, are clearly understood by staff. The positive impact of structured opportunities for support and challenge to tackle weaker performance in some subject areas is becoming increasingly evident.

The academy does an exceptional amount of work to promote community cohesion in the local area, working with a wide range of partners including the local authority, adult education providers and local primary schools. The needs of the community are well known. The national and international dimensions of community cohesion are growing, for example, through links with schools in India and Zimbabwe. The strength of the work done in the local community and the commitment to improving the educational outcomes for the students illustrate the academy's commitment to, and success in, promoting equality of opportunity. Good, secure safeguarding procedures and practices are in place and staff are confident and well trained to ensure students' safety.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Their responses are largely positive, in particular in relation to the recent improvements. A few raised concerns about how well the academy communicates with them. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found that programmes to involve parents and carers in the life of the academy, as well as systems to act on their views are wide ranging and regularly evaluated in order to be improved further.

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Some parents and carers raised concerns about students' behaviour. The inspection team followed up these concerns and found behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oasis Academy 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 191 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 557 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	26	118	62	16	8	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	51	27	113	59	20	10	5	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	35	101	53	19	10	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	21	125	65	21	11	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	37	19	126	66	22	12	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	14	125	65	34	18	6	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	14	129	68	31	16	4	2
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)	37	19	118	62	18	9	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	17	116	61	29	15	6	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	27	97	51	34	18	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	15	108	57	38	20	8	4
The school is led and managed effectively	55	29	111	58	18	9	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	31	104	54	17	9	6	3

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 principal, 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.



25 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Oasis Academy Coulsdon, Homefield Road, Croydon CR5 1ES

It was a great pleasure to meet you when my colleagues and I inspected your academy recently. Thank you for the help you gave us. We were all impressed by your courteous behaviour. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, in meetings and around the academy at social times. As well as looking at your work, we also read the questionnaires that you completed – for which many thanks – and those from the academy's staff and your parents and carers.

The overall effectiveness of your academy is good. Leaders and managers are doing a good job in bringing about improvements. You achieve well, examination and test results are improving and standards are rising. We were very impressed by your contributions to the academy and the wider community. You told us you feel very well looked after and value the positive relationships you have with each other and with staff. Our observations endorsed your views. Everyone is determined to keep on improving and we talked with the staff and the governing body about some things they will be working on to help the academy to improve even further.

We recommend that the academy should raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching and learning further and by ensuring that marking consistently provides you all with clear guidance on how to improve your work. We have also asked that middle managers in the academy are all consistent and effective in helping to raise standards. The few of you who are not regular attenders can help by ensuring you attend regularly. All can be on time for the beginning of the academy day and take care with the presentation of your work.

We hope you all keep on trying hard and enjoy the move into the new building.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector

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