

# Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

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

## Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

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

- Over time, school leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Teachers do not consistently give helpful guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.
- Despite improvements, attendance is not high enough, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Teaching does not challenge pupils to think more deeply about their learning.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough in lessons and around the school.
- Some pupils do not have the confidence to attempt more challenging work. Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' resilience are in their early stages.

### The school has the following strengths

- Current leaders' actions are rapidly improving behaviour, attendance, teaching and assessment. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making more progress as a result.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students achieve well, especially in vocational subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed strongly. Pupils are proud of their links with the local community, which prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- The reorganised curriculum is broad and balanced to meet pupils' needs. The 'transition curriculum' is helping pupils to catch up in literacy and numeracy. Alternative provision caters well for pupils who need help to improve their behaviour and attendance.
- The majority of staff, pupils and parents appreciate the improvements made to the school, particularly in behaviour management. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are supported and safe.
- Pupils value the careers education, information, advice and guidance they receive, which is raising their aspirations for the future.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve pupils' progress so that it is in line with other pupils' progress nationally, particularly for the most able pupils and in mathematics.
- Embed leaders' expectations of teaching and learning so that:
  - teachers use the information they have about pupils' different starting points to plan learning which challenges pupils so they make better progress
  - teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are raised, especially for most-able pupils
  - pupils attempt more challenging work
  - pupils understand what to do to improve their work.
- Further improve behaviour and attendance through consistent application of the school's policies and management systems.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors' efforts since the last inspection did not result in sustained improvements in pupils' achievement. Over time, the school has not met the government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The 2016 key stage 4 results were well below those of other schools nationally.
- Since the last inspection, some aspects of the school have improved steadily. For example, outcomes in English, science and practical subjects have risen. Behaviour and attendance are getting better. The sixth form has substantially improved. This shows that leaders have the capacity to keep the school moving successfully in the right direction.
- The pace of improvement is now accelerating. Changes made to senior leadership and to professional governance have added to the capacity of leaders to make sustained improvements to the work of the school. Current leaders have introduced strategies that are quickly improving attendance, behaviour, teaching and assessment. Consequently, current pupils are now making more rapid progress than previously across a broad range of subjects. The vast majority of pupils appreciate the new focus on learning and achieving, especially in Year 11, where pupils are developing more confidence and are making more progress than previously.
- The quality of subject leadership is improving because there is more consistency between departments. Many subject leaders now use information about pupils' progress more efficiently to target those who need extra help to succeed. Strong leaders in English have developed a curriculum that interests and engages pupils so that they make better progress than previously. Senior leaders provide additional support for middle leaders who need more training to become effective in their roles.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection have not been consistent enough across a broad range of subjects. The new leader of teaching and learning is making sure that systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching are more robust. Teachers appreciate this support, which is helping them to improve their practice. Staff morale is high, as reflected in the responses to the Ofsted staff survey, which show high levels of trust in the current leadership to improve the school further. Leaders know that more needs to be done to share strengths in teaching across the school, particularly approaches to challenging the most able pupils.
- Leaders' changes to the curriculum have ensured that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. The vast majority of pupils study a broad range of academic and applied qualifications that meets their interests and needs well. The proportion of current pupils studying modern foreign languages and humanities subjects at key stage 4 has increased. Pupils who need alternative provision study a bespoke programme that meets their individual learning, emotional and social needs well.
- Leaders have reviewed the use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities because this group of pupils has underachieved historically. Recent changes to how teaching assistants help individuals, and the extra training for

teachers, are starting to make a difference. These pupils are starting to attend school more often and are making better progress.

- Leaders have reviewed their use of pupil premium funding because outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were too low. Funding is used appropriately to help raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. Older pupils benefit from extra teaching, including at a weekend residential course. Current leaders' monitoring of the impact of these approaches is more robust than previously. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are starting to make better progress.
- Pupil premium funding at key stage 3 is used with Year 7 catch-up funding to help pupils make rapid progress in literacy and numeracy through the 'transition curriculum'. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils at key stage 3 are now making progress in line with others in school. However, they do not make progress similar to other pupils nationally.
- Leaders promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and especially enjoy the various sports clubs. Visits to local and national places of interest help pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain and allow them to build strong links with the local community. Activities range from representing the school at the local Remembrance service to raising money so that underprivileged children can have a good Christmas. Pupils are especially proud of the 'Dementia Café', which they run for a local care home to help residents interact with each other.
- Pupils know that working hard to gain qualifications will make them more employable in the future. They find the careers information, advice and guidance provided at the school to be helpful and informative. They relish the chance to undertake work experience in Year 10 because, as one pupil said, 'It makes us aware of the real world.' Most-able pupils value extra-curricular activities such as the 'brilliant club', where tutors from a local university give them harder work to do. This is raising pupils' aspirations about the types of opportunities open to them when they leave school. Pupils in the sixth form praised their teachers for the guidance they receive to help them understand the different possibilities for future work. Increasing numbers continue their studies at university. Many are targeting apprenticeships, supported by school leaders in their applications.
- Leaders' work to improve the attendance, behaviour and welfare of pupils has become increasingly effective this year. More pupils attend school more regularly than at the last inspection. There are fewer incidences of disruptive behaviour. Responses to the parent survey show that the majority of parents support the school's efforts to improve standards of behaviour. However, some expressed concern with the consistency of implementing the new policy.

## **Governance of the school**

- Regular monitoring and support from Oasis Community Learning multi-academy trust has ensured that the school has made some improvements since the trust took over the school in 2014. However, improvements were not rapid enough. Recent changes to professional governance have resulted in a more accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Actions taken have swiftly and effectively

increased the leadership capacity in the school. As a result, improvements are now implemented more consistently and are having a positive and rapid impact on behaviour, attendance, teaching and pupils' progress.

- The local academy council's work, to include the local community in the life of the school, is helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. They are especially effective in helping pupils to understand the local job market and in raising their aspirations for the future, for example through strengthening links with local universities and through sourcing work placements for students in the sixth form.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained in safeguarding and clear systems are in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Pupils in the school are known well, as individuals, by the staff. As a result, any changes in behaviour are quickly spotted. Leaders liaise effectively and promptly with parents and outside agencies who support pupils' welfare.
- Leaders have had training in safer recruitment and there are effective procedures in place to ensure that the staff working in the school are suitably trained and checked. Both school sites are secure.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in their community and online. A very large majority of parents say that their child feels safe at school and pupils say that they know whom to speak to if they have any concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the quality of teaching and learning over time has been too variable across the school. Consequently, pupils' achievement has varied across subjects and year groups. Despite improvements, teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Frequent changes of teachers and difficulties in recruitment have meant that older pupils have had little consistency in teaching over time. This has limited their achievement in a range of subjects. However, improvements in staffing this year have had a rapid impact on pupils' progress, especially those pupils in Year 11, so that more pupils are now catching up. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is usually good. Most pupils feel well supported by their teachers.
- Not enough teaching challenges pupils from their starting points, particularly the most able pupils. Leaders' work to make sure that teachers plan learning which encourages pupils to think deeply is in its early stages.
- New assessment systems are becoming increasingly more embedded. Teachers' assessments are more rigorous and accurate. This helps them to plan relevant learning activities for pupils. However, this is not the case across all subjects. Some pupils do not know how to make progress in their learning because some teachers do not use the schools' feedback policy consistently or effectively.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Teaching assistants support the learning of individuals and groups increasingly effectively. Recent training in how to meet the needs of this group of pupils in class is starting to have an impact, so that these pupils are making better progress.
- Pupils who follow the 'transition curriculum' at key stage 3 make strong progress in literacy and numeracy skills. This is helping to minimise gaps in achievement from an early stage, so that pupils can then access the whole curriculum more effectively.
- Leaders' work to improve literacy across the whole school is having a positive impact, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who need to catch up. Pupils appreciate the additional focus on reading at key stage 3. One pupil proudly explained that his reading had improved because teachers had gone 'back to basics' to help him with his phonics. More frequent opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length across the curriculum are also helping pupils to make more progress.
- Where teaching is strong, teachers follow school expectations well. They use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' thinking, and provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Pupils are supported effectively by teachers to try harder work and are given clear advice on how to improve.
- Teaching in practical subjects is particularly strong. In Year 7 technology, pupils' aspirations were raised as they enthusiastically used rich vocabulary to explain their learning, telling inspectors that they were 'young business people, not pupils'.
- The quality of teaching in English has steadily improved since the last inspection. This is because of the department leaders' focus on monitoring and support, and in designing a curriculum which maintains pupils' interest. Clear assessment procedures, and reflection on what pupils can do and need to do better, is helping pupils to make more progress.
- More recently, the quality of teaching in geography and French has rapidly improved, so that pupils in key stage 4 are now making accelerated progress to catch up.
- Extra support from Oasis Community Learning has been effective in improving teaching in mathematics, particularly for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 11. However, teaching in mathematics is not consistently strong across the whole school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils lack confidence in their abilities and have little resilience when attempting learning on their own. Where this is the case, learning progresses at a slow pace as pupils wait for individual attention from the teacher before attempting work. The school's work to raise pupils' self-esteem is starting to have an impact. One pupil said, 'No one says you can't do something; we're encouraged to try.'

- The pastoral team provide high levels of care for pupils, liaising promptly with outside agencies where necessary. The majority of pupils say that they feel well cared for by staff in the school.
- Cases of homophobic or racist comments are rare and incidences of bullying are reducing sharply. This is as a result of leaders' work to promote mutual respect and tolerance for all, for example through assemblies which highlight the importance of not prejudging each other. Some pupils who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey expressed a concern about bullying, but said that if they had an issue, there are staff who will help them sort it out. Pupils trained in restorative justice approaches help others solve disagreements calmly. Similarly, 'anti-bullying ambassadors' provide support for pupils who need it.
- Alternative provision is used well to support pupils who find it hard to access mainstream lessons. Learning is purposeful and orderly, focusing effectively on pupils' individual emotional, social and academic needs. Many pupils reintegrate back into school successfully as a result of the care received in alternative provision.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Over time, attendance has not been good enough. Attendance is rising, because leaders highlight the importance of coming to school regularly with both pupils and their parents. Leaders' effective work with outside agencies is also having a positive impact in getting pupils to come to school more often, including in the sixth form. Differences in the attendance of groups of pupils have minimised. The attendance of vulnerable pupils has improved rapidly, particularly those who are looked after by the local authority. However, leaders know that attendance is still too low, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough. In a small number of lessons, where teaching is not challenging, or where teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently, low-level disruptions limit pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is mostly, but not always, mature and calm. Although some parents disagree with the 'zero tolerance' attitude of the new behaviour policy, most pupils are positive about it because it has improved punctuality and is helping to reduce low-level disruption in lessons. As one pupil said, 'It's made people sort their own behaviour out.'
- Leaders have worked hard and successfully to reduce the number of serious behaviour incidents in school. The impact of this work is seen in the large reduction in fixed-term exclusions, and in the improved attitudes to learning of the vast majority of pupils in school.
- Most pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and with each other. Leaders' focus on positive behaviour is valued by staff and pupils. 'Pupil passports' are helping pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to see the rewards of working hard. Pupil-led workshops highlight the importance of getting on well with each other.

Assemblies encourage reflection on how to 'be the best version of you'. This, coupled with the recent introduction of a new behaviour policy giving instant sanctions for poor behaviour, is helping to create a school culture where pupils believe in their abilities to succeed. This is in its early stages, but older pupils commented that behaviour has improved since the school joined Oasis Community Learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement because teaching is not challenging enough for these pupils. Leaders' work to change this is in its early stages and shows little impact currently.
- For the past three years, pupils at key stage 4 have not made as much progress as they should across a broad range of subjects. Examination results in 2016 were low, with pupils of all abilities making less progress than pupils nationally. Progress was especially low for pupils in mathematics and for the most able pupils.
- Lesson observations, work in pupils' books and assessment information indicate that current pupils in all year groups are making better progress than last year, and in many subjects are making rapid progress. This is as a result of a concerted effort by leaders and teachers to improve pupils' behaviour, to ensure that assessments are rigorous and accurate and to improve teaching.
- Extra help for individual pupils is targeted carefully and is helping them to make rapid progress, particularly in Year 11. Changes to the curriculum to provide more focus on areas of particular underachievement are having an impact. Pupils said that the extra support is inspiring them to work harder.
- Most pupils start school with lower attainment than pupils nationally. Recent intensive work, at key stage 3, to improve literacy and numeracy for these pupils is helping them to catch up. Current Year 8 pupils make more progress than their predecessors, especially in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been below that of others nationally across a broad range of subjects. However, progress for current disadvantaged pupils is improving so that it is increasingly in line with other pupils in school. Current leaders have reviewed how pupil premium funding is used so that it is now used effectively at key stage 3 to help pupils catch up with their peers. In Year 11, extra teaching and support is helping these pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in English and mathematics in particular.
- Although progress in mathematics has improved rapidly in Years 7, 8 and 11, progress in Years 9 and 10 is not as strong.
- In 2016, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below that of all pupils nationally, because those absent or receiving education away from the school site did not make similar progress to those in school. However, current pupils make more progress as a result of improved attendance, teaching and support for this group.
- Effective careers advice and guidance is helping to increase the number of pupils who move on to further education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Strong leadership of the 16 to 19 study programmes has ensured that the sixth form has improved at a faster rate than the rest of the school. Skilful teaching leads to students making good and improving progress.
- The 16 to 19 study programme offers students the opportunity to choose from a small range of academic and vocational courses. Previously, some students did not achieve as well as they could because they followed courses which were not consistently well matched to their needs. Leaders have taken action to reorganise the curriculum carefully since the previous inspection so that students' needs and interests are being met. The increasing number of students who stay on to study in the sixth form, and the higher proportion of students who take up places in further education or training at the end of Year 13, are testament to this.
- In 2016, students made progress in line with others nationally in academic subjects, and made very strong progress in vocational subjects. The progress of current students is improving still further, particularly in academic subjects.
- Leaders and teachers have high expectations of what students in the sixth form can achieve. Students are grateful for guidance which helps them to understand precisely what they need to do to improve their work. They are prepared well for examinations and treat each other and their teachers with mutual respect. Consequently, students make good progress.
- Students in the sixth form behave with maturity. Strong pastoral care supports their well-being. Leaders' work with local agencies to help students subject to mental health issues is helping these students attend school more regularly.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good, and particularly strong in vocational subjects. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to ask challenging questions which stretch students' understanding. For example, in one sports science lesson the teacher skilfully questioned students about how different sports might find the science of nutrition useful in improving achievement.
- Students who need help to further develop their English skills are supported to achieve well. Support in mathematics is less well developed, but improving as a result of leaders' focus on improving teaching in mathematics across the whole school.
- Students enjoy life in the sixth form and say that they feel safe and well prepared for future life. The school places a high priority on promoting ambition among students, encouraging them to consider a broad range of possible future destinations, including university and apprenticeships. Strong community links, for example, mean that local businesses regularly visit the school so that students know the different career possibilities available to them.
- Leaders' priorities for further improvement of the sixth form are clear and appropriate. They implement them with a sense of urgency. For example, students' attendance is improving because leaders make sure that students who need support to come to school more regularly receive it, especially those who have social, emotional and health needs.

- Some students undertake work experience with local employers, and most contribute to community projects such as the 'Women of the future' programme, which encourages women to consider a range of different career opportunities. Many students are also learning to become lifeguards, to help protect people using the local beaches. Leaders' work to increase the amount of more formal work experience is ongoing.

## School details

Unique reference number	135721
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10021144

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,512
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	140
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Paul Aspin
Principal	Mr John Cavadino
Telephone number	01795 873591
Website	<a href="http://www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org">www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@oasisisleofsheppey.org">office@oasisisleofsheppey.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 March 2015

## Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey is a larger than average-sized 11 to 18 school, which operates on two sites on the Isle of Sheppey.
- The principal and the associate principals were appointed since the last inspection.
- The academy became part of Oasis Community Learning in January 2014. Oasis schools nationally belong to the Oasis multi-academy trust, governed by the Oasis Community Learning Board.

- The regional director of the trust fulfils many of the statutory functions of governance. She began working with the school in autumn 2016. The regional director has brokered additional support for the school from within the Oasis Community Learning group.
- The local academy council's role is to make sure that the school has strong links with the community.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion of students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- There are low levels of stability in the area. There are higher than average numbers of children looked after in the school.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision called Swale Inclusion Service.
- The school did not meet the current government floor standards in 2016, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 53 lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Several of these were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff, the chair of the local academy council and leaders of alternative provision. Inspectors met with the regional director and national director of monitoring and standards of Oasis Community Learning multi-academy trust. Inspectors also took account of the 165 responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff.
- Inspectors spoke both formally and informally with pupils and took account of the 156 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, and observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. They considered the 260 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View and the 76 free text responses, as well as letters and emails sent to Ofsted during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Watkiss	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Dennison	Ofsted Inspector

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