

Oldbury Academy

Pound Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 8NE

Inspection dates

5–6 December 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	Good
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

- In 2017, too many pupils did not make enough progress in English, mathematics and in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) element, including modern foreign languages (MFL) and science. This was also the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching in the school is improving, but continues to vary across subjects. Historically, teaching has not enabled pupils to make the progress of which they are capable in some subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding in lessons carefully so that they can give them extra support or move them on to more demanding work. Provision for most-able pupils is not yet developed. Challenge activities form part of most lessons but, in many cases, are too easy.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's overall performance is too generous because it focuses overly on the positive changes that have occurred since September 2017. Leaders do not focus enough on pupils' achievement and progress from individual starting points.
- Arrangements for tracking the progress of pupils in the school are underdeveloped. As a result, leaders and governors do not have a clear enough picture of how well pupils are doing.
- Although the quality of middle leadership is improving, not all middle leaders are equally effective at improving teaching and pupils' achievement
- Fixed-term exclusions are above national averages. Leaders are aware of this and have robust action plans in place to reduce exclusions.

The school has the following strengths

- Since September, the headteacher, supported by a restructured and capable leadership team, has accelerated the pace of improvement. This has been supported by the successful recruitment of high-quality teaching staff and leaders.
- The sixth form is good. Progress for academic subjects improved in 2017.
- Pupils are very well cared for at the school and their behaviour is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all is as effective as the best in the school, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan and implement activities that are well-matched to pupils' needs
 - establish higher expectations of pupils across different subjects in all years
 - consistently challenge the most able pupils
 - check regularly on the progress of pupils in lessons and offer extra support or challenge as necessary.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on pupils' outcomes by:
 - monitoring rigorously the effectiveness of strategies to promote the rapid progress of individual groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - continuing to develop the skills and expertise of middle leaders so that all are successful in securing good teaching and pupils' good progress in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that systems and strategies for tracking pupils' progress are used effectively by teachers in order to inform teaching and to check that underachievement is addressed quickly.
- Further reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions by supporting all pupils to meet the school's expectations of behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not taken sufficient action to raise pupils' outcomes in some key areas, including English and the EBacc elements. While actions since the last inspection have had a positive impact on behaviour, pupils' personal development and the ethos of the school, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and underachievement by specific groups of pupils have not been tackled with sufficient urgency.
- Leaders have an overgenerous view of the overall effectiveness of the school because there is insufficient focus on the impact of the strategies that are being employed to improve the quality of teaching. Some middle leaders are not contributing well enough to the development of the whole school.
- Plans for improving the school have not yet led to consistent practice in the classroom. Arrangements for tracking the progress of pupils in the school are underdeveloped. As a result, leaders do not have a clear enough picture of how well pupils are doing to enable them to evaluate what current progress is like.
- The high turnover of staff has been a contributory factor as to why outcomes have not improved quickly enough. A few parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, commented that the use of cover is still too frequent, particularly in science.
- Following the external review of the pupil premium strategy that was recommended at the last inspection, the headteacher has made the use of pupil premium funding a priority and has recently delegated responsibility for this to a member of his leadership team. Previously, the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils had not been used to good effect and, as a result, gaps between the achievement of these pupils and that of their peers had not diminished rapidly enough. The current strategy is fit for purpose and, since September, leaders have established a firmer grasp of this funding and are ensuring that it is used more purposefully. The appropriate use of the Year 7 catch-up premium is enabling some pupils to develop better numeracy and literacy skills by the time they start in Year 8. However, given the large proportion of pupils who enter the school in Year 7 below national expectations, school leaders are aware that more needs to be done to have greater impact on more pupils.
- Since September there have been much-needed changes to both the structure of the school's leadership and personnel. Following a successful recruitment drive, senior leaders have been joined by experienced staff, including middle leaders and teachers. The school is now fully staffed for the first time since the last inspection. Leaders' roles and responsibilities are now better defined due to the increased capacity. The impact of these leaders is becoming evident through the pace at which targeted improvements are beginning to be implemented. This is demonstrating that current leaders have the necessary skills and abilities to bring about further improvements.
- Many parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, recognised and appreciated the new direction of the school.

- Newly qualified teachers are very positive about the support they receive from school leaders and its impact on their confidence in the classroom. They particularly value the regular mentoring that they receive from more experienced colleagues.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and the new pathways introduced at key stage 4 are well suited to all prior attainment groups. Last year, leaders made curriculum decisions that focused on external progress measures rather than meeting the needs of individual pupils but this is no longer the case.
- Pupils value the extra opportunities to support their learning that are provided before and after school. Leaders are working hard to ensure that these sessions complement the lessons that take place during curriculum time in an effort to secure more rapid progress.
- There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities on offer that contribute to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils, however, say they would like more. Disadvantaged pupils are supported well so they can access additional activities.
- Leaders promote pupils' behaviour and personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. British values are threaded through the curriculum, and this ensures that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Leaders' clear focus on the support of all the young people in their care strongly influences the values and the culture of the school. There is a real sense of community about the school. This is reflected in the positive relationships between pupils, sixth-form students and staff at all levels.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an overgenerous view of the school's performance. They are not well informed about the school's assessment information and, consequently, do not hold leaders to account for the progress of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- At the last inspection, a review of governance was recommended. Governors have implemented many of the recommendations but understand that further work is needed to ensure that their ambitions for pupils are translated into more consistent practice in the classroom.
- Governors have access to appropriate training in safeguarding. Governors ensure that the relevant policies, checks and training are in place so that pupils are kept safe and demonstrate a good commitment to ensuring that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors are very supportive of leaders and are active in school life.

Safeguarding

- Leaders, including governors, have developed an effective culture of safeguarding in the school. The approach taken by leaders to keeping pupils safe, and supporting them when they are at risk, is diligent. Training for safeguarding is effective and ensures that all adults in the school contribute to a culture where children feel safe.

- The leadership of safeguarding is vigilant; the designated safeguarding lead is tenacious in her work. A team of dedicated pastoral leaders, supported by senior leaders, ensure that pupils are looked after and cared for. Close working with outside agencies and prompt, effective referral systems ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident that they know who to speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils are taught to stay safe by their teachers as well as through a programme of visiting speakers. Tutor time has been re-organised to allow this work to be further enhanced.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders have set out new expectations of teaching in the school. Although this has led to greater clarity about what pupils can expect in lessons, there is still some inconsistency in how these expectations are implemented in different classrooms. The most effective practice that is evident in some subjects, for example mathematics and history, is not yet being shared widely enough to encourage more rapid improvement in teaching overall.
- Improvements have been made since the last inspection but the quality of teaching overall remains variable. Some teachers do not sufficiently take account of information about different groups of pupils. The quality of support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable. As a result, pupils from these groups are not making sufficient progress over time.
- Where teaching is weaker, it exhibits some of the following characteristics: planning that does not always consider the needs of pupils' different starting points; a lack of challenge for pupils of different abilities; and teachers' questioning that does not always extend or check on understanding effectively.
- Provision for the most able pupils is not yet well developed. Challenge activities including 'hot questions' form part of most lessons but, in many cases, do not demand enough of these learners. At key stage 4, the exemplar material used for examination work does not always expose pupils to the full range of grades available to them. However, where teachers set a good level of challenge pupils respond with a high level of motivation and make more rapid progress.
- Leaders have devised a system of providing each pupil with aspirational targets, which are based on their individual starting points. Pupils can explain these targets but cannot yet articulate consistently the steps they need to take to reach their next milestones.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills during tutor time is variable. Sessions are not as effective as they might be because some teachers have not received sufficient training about how to promote these key skills. Where teachers do have the necessary skills and confidence, pupils make good progress.
- Some improvement in teaching is evident in English. The department has benefited from being part of local 'hubs' bringing back good practice seen elsewhere. However, this is not yet leading to rapid progress for pupils at key stage 4.

- The strongest teaching is in mathematics. Teachers know their students well and tasks are pitched appropriately as to the needs of individual pupils. Questioning is used effectively and encourages learners to think more deeply. Collaboration across the department is evident, ensuring consistent practice. Expectations from teachers are high and pupils are encouraged to do their very best. Pupils appreciate the quality of teaching they receive in mathematics. A typical pupil comment was: 'I learn more in maths. It's the best teaching in the school.'
- Progress is more rapid when planning considers the starting points of individual pupils. In a key stage 3 drama lesson, the teacher used reading age scores to inform the planning of the task given to pupils. This meant that pupils could access the lesson more effectively and made good progress.
- Relationships with pupils are good. This ensures that classrooms are calm environments where most teachers manage behaviour well.
- Homework is set regularly across a range of subjects to support pupils' learning. Systems are being embedded across individual departments to promote consistency. Leaders have recently introduced a new online method of recording and tracking the submission of homework which has gone down well with parents. However, some parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, felt that the setting and monitoring of homework was not consistent as pupils moved through the school.
- Pupils appreciate the support they are given in their learning from the school's pastoral team, teaching assistants and academic coaches. Some pupils who were spoken to by inspectors feel that they have made better progress because of this support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy with the quality of support they receive and the lengths teachers and other adults go to provide additional support. 'CARE', the school's mantra, is reflected in the way the school operates. The school vision that encompasses respect and the celebration of achievement is highly visible on walls, on displays and on staircases and is recognised fully by pupils. School leaders are rightly proud of the significant increase of praise points that have been awarded to pupils over the last four terms rewarding those who consistently 'get it right' in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are encouraged to play an active role in the school and make the most of the many opportunities presented to them. They respond by eagerly taking on positions of responsibility, which help develop their leadership skills. Junior leadership team spoke enthusiastically about a concern they had raised with senior leaders about the positioning of a basketball hoop which they felt, potentially, was a safety hazard. Senior leaders listened to the group and worked collaboratively, empowering the group to find a solution.

- Most pupils are confident young people. They show respect for others and have positive attitudes to school. During tutor time pupils were keen to express their views and contribute to discussion.
- There is a good range of interesting clubs and activities provided. This supports pupils in developing confidence, resilience and a strong sense of community.
- Assemblies and tutorials cover aspects of safety, including bullying, e-safety, peer pressure and extremism. Those pupils spoken to during the inspection said they feel safe and secure in school. School leaders are well supported by a wide range of experienced and well-qualified external agencies who contribute to curricular and enrichment activities for pupils across all year groups.
- Pupils report that they feel cared for. They know who to go to if they are worried about anything. A few parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that the school does not manage bullying effectively. Those pupils who were spoken to by inspectors, both in pupil forums and in lessons, overwhelmingly disagree.
- The staff in the school are very caring and know the circumstances of individual pupils extremely well. This ensures that pupils are helped to settle into the school quickly, as any difficulties are identified early and pupils are nurtured carefully as they grow older.
- Leaders monitor carefully the well-being of pupils who attend alternative provision. They closely track pupils' attendance and progress. Leaders work closely with pupils and parents to ensure that the courses provided for these pupils are based on their interests and individual needs. This ensures that the learning which is accessed prepares these pupils well for their working life. Leaders keep in regular contact with the providers to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Independent careers advice, together with school guidance, enables pupils to make appropriate choices about the next steps in their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved since the last inspection and rapid improvements have been secured this academic year. This is because the new three-level referral system is being used effectively to reduce incidents of low-level disruption across the school. In-school data shows a reduction in the number of in-class incidents that are reported. Behaviour during social times and in corridors at lesson changeover is mostly calm and orderly.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They open doors and greet visitors courteously.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above the national average. The rate of persistent absence is falling because of the impact of appropriate rewards and follow-up work by external agencies and the school. Attendance for pupils who access alternative provision is good.
- The behaviour of pupils who attend alternative provision settings is monitored closely. Leaders communicate effectively with the providers to ensure high standards of discipline are maintained.

- Fixed-term exclusions are above the national average. Inspectors saw clear evidence that this sanction is having a positive impact on managing pupils' behaviour, although they lose learning time as a result. When pupils return from exclusions their behaviour improves. A small number of pupils have been supported into alternative curriculum settings when required, where they receive individualised pastoral support. The number of pupils who have been permanently excluded from school has reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils appeared to make average progress in 2017. However, this headline figure is misleading and is supported by a strong performance in the open element where all pupils were entered for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification even though this did not form part of the formal curriculum.
- Progress in English, mathematics and in the EBacc element, which includes MFL and science, was below the national average.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was low in English and mathematics. Some improvements were noted in the EBacc element, which includes MFL and science, but progress in these subjects remains below the national average. Leaders have put more effective plans in place this academic year to tackle the underperformance of disadvantaged pupils and these differences are beginning to diminish, particularly in mathematics.
- Progress in mathematics was also slower than expected in 2017. Teaching observed during the inspection and assessment information provided by middle leaders and class teachers suggests that progress will improve this year. Leaders are actively promoting numeracy across the curriculum and are using additional funding to ensure that pupils make rapid gains in Year 7.
- Average attainment scores per pupil were broadly in line with all state-funded schools nationally. Attainment in the open element was higher than the national average while attainment in English, mathematics and in the EBacc elements, including science and MFL, was lower than average.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in 2017 was below the national average for all pupils and broadly in line with the average attainment of all disadvantaged pupils in the country. Attainment in English and mathematics was, however, lower than 2016.
- Attainment for lower-prior-attaining pupils saw an increase in 2017. This reflects the good support the school provides for pupils who join the school with low levels of numeracy and literacy.
- Historically, outcomes in science have been weak. However, a change of leadership in September 2017 and the introduction of a lead practitioner are leading to more consistent practice. Inspectors were encouraged by improvements seen in books.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that progress is improving. Work seen in books and assessment information shared by individual teachers support this. However, the inconsistencies that exist across the school in implementing improvements in teaching and learning mean that progress remains variable. Progress

in mathematics, history and physical education is good and it is improving in English and technology. Progress is, however, more rapid in key stage 3.

- Many pupils have weak basic literacy skills when they join the school. Leaders have introduced a school-wide programme to improve literacy levels. This is funded through the Year 7 catch-up fund. More pupils now catch up before they start in Year 8 because of this targeted intervention. However, inconsistencies in delivery mean that the funding could have an even greater impact with improved staff training.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. These pupils develop good English literacy skills due to the support they are given by teaching assistants and academic coaches.
- A significant amount of additional support is now in place for all pupils currently in Year 11, including support for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, say they are appreciative of the support offered by school. This, too, is contributing to the progress seen in mathematics and history.
- The curriculum is designed to prepare pupils well for their next steps in education or training. Leaders use the information they have about pupils to plan individually designed pathways. Consequently, the number of pupils who leave the school and go on to further education, employment or apprenticeships is high and rising.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- There is effective provision in the sixth form and the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes are fully met. Students are well provided for and are supported by effective leadership which sets high expectations.
- Outcomes are good in the sixth form. The traditionally strong progress scores in vocational subjects was further improved in 2017 and strong leadership has brought about improvements in outcomes for academic subjects since the last inspection.
- Teaching is effective and teachers set out clear expectations for students to develop their learning skills. Work is better matched to students' needs in the sixth form than elsewhere in the school and effective questioning is being used to challenge students' thinking.
- Teachers know their students well and plan carefully to meet individual needs. For example, in physical education (PE) teaching is being targeted according to individual starting points and rapid progress is being made. Outcomes for those students who have to retake their English or mathematics GCSE are improving. Support for these students is now more structured and students are better prepared for these examinations.
- Attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes to learning are all strong in the sixth form. Students enjoy their studies. They are mature and appreciate the opportunities that the academy provides for them.
- A broad range of academic and vocational options is offered in the sixth form. Effective careers advice and guidance ensures that students take subjects that are well matched

to their ability and aspirations. High-quality support means that most complete the courses they start in Year 12.

- Leaders provide a comprehensive enrichment programme to ensure that students receive a well-rounded education and good preparation for working life. They know how to live safely and enjoy healthy lifestyles because they understand the risks they might face otherwise.
- Destination measures show that a high proportion of students go on to further education, training or employment. Students are well prepared for these next steps because their personal, social and employability skills are developed well.

School details

Unique reference number	137701
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10037169

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1568
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	95
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sally Harvey
Headteacher	Philip Shackleton
Telephone number	0121 533 3750
Website	www.oldburyacademy.co.uk
Email address	philip.shackleton@oldburyacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2015

Information about this school

- 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.
- Oldbury Academy is much larger than most secondary schools.
- There are a higher proportion of boys than girls in all year groups.

- Almost half of the students are of minority ethnic heritage.
- One in four students speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above average.
- Twelve pupils attend off-site provision full time. Pupils attend Impact Independent School, Whiteheath Pupil Referral Unit and Huntercombe Hospital, Stafford.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in parts of 74 lessons, 38 of which were jointly observed with school leaders. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in pupils' books. Current assessment information was shared by some middle leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and students from the sixth form.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. A telephone conversation was held with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors analysed the 79 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the 68 free-text responses submitted by parents.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at documents, including those relating to safeguarding. They looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying, the school's development plan and self-evaluation document. A sample of governing body minutes were also provided.

Inspection team

Richard Gill, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Lunt	Ofsted Inspector
David Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2018