

Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 136462 |
| Local authority | Wakefield |
| Inspection number | 395344 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 May 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Bernard Campbell HMI |

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

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,827 |
| Of which number on roll in the sixth form | 440 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Drake |
| Headteacher | Martin Shevill |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 January 2007 |
| School address | Storrs Hill Road Ossett WF5 0DG |
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Mary Lanovy-Taylor
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 46 lessons taught by 46 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised the academy's plans, records, analysis of data and self-evaluation. Inspectors took account of 273 parental questionnaires, 100 staff questionnaires and 124 students' questionnaires. Seventy five responses were available from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) which informed the planning of the inspection.

Information about the school

Ossett School converted to academy status in February 2011. Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College is a much larger than average size secondary school with a large sixth form. It has fewer than average minority ethnic students. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with special needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The academy meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The academy has specialisms in technology and sport.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory and improving academy. The academy is not yet good because students, over time, have not made good progress in English or mathematics. Higher ability students make satisfactory progress. The sixth form is satisfactory because students' achievement is satisfactory. The great improvement in the current year, especially in mathematics, has been achieved with extensive additional support for students in preparation for examinations rather than through consistently good teaching in lessons. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially in extra-curricular activities, contribute to the positive attitudes of students and parents and carers towards this popular and over-subscribed academy.
- Over the previous three years, achievement declined from good to satisfactory in the main school and was inadequate in mathematics in 2011. In the current year, improvements have been made to achievement in the main school, with a significant improvement in mathematics. Achievement has previously been consistently satisfactory in the sixth form. Students are now making improved progress in the sixth form this year.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching ranges from outstanding to inadequate. Much of the teaching is good but too much is satisfactory. This year, good additional support and intervention for examination students has accelerated progress and filled gaps in learning at Key Stage 4. The quality of teaching is improving. A higher proportion of good teaching was seen in the sixth form than in the main school.
- Students behave well and their positive attitudes make a good contribution to teaching and learning. Attendance is above average and students feel safe from bullying.
- Effective action by the Principal to improve the leadership and quality of teaching in English, mathematics and the sixth form has led to improved outcomes in the current year. The robust planning and implementation of additional teaching and support has

successfully accelerated students' progress in English and mathematics this year. The Principal, supported by a relatively new and highly committed team of senior leaders have recently brought about significant improvements and the academy has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise and then maintain the improved achievement by:
 - sustaining the recent improvements in mathematics and English to ensure that each year, students at each level of prior attainment, exceed the national average for the proportions making three and four levels of progress at GCSE, especially those with higher ability
 - improving the progress students make at A and AS level from satisfactory to good.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - improving the match of learning tasks to all students' needs, especially the higher ability
 - using questioning more effectively to extend students' thinking skills
 - improving the consistency and quality of marking and feedback to better inform students about how to improve.
- Increase the rigour in monitoring and evaluating teaching by:
 - using one grade rather than a combined grade to more accurately evaluate the quality of teaching
 - tracking the improvements in teaching more regularly and systematically.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the academy with attainment that is above average. However, attainment in the key measure of five GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, was average in two of the last three years. English was consistently average and mathematics declined to significantly below average. Early GCSE results in mathematics show a great improvement for 2012, to higher levels than previously achieved. In addition, academy assessment data indicates a marked improvement in English. Overall, attainment is now above average.

Students make satisfactory progress. Over the last three years, students' overall achievement was affected by underachievement in English and especially in mathematics in 2011 where progress was exceptionally weak. In 2011, overall students underachieved, especially the higher ability. Leaders' effective actions have led to significantly improved progress in the current Year 11. Early GCSE results in mathematics show that students made at least satisfactory progress from their starting points, including those with higher ability. Provisional data also show that the academy is on track for a marked improvement in English. The small proportion of lower ability students makes good progress. Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive good support and progress well. Students with weaknesses in literacy improve their skills through effectively targeted additional provision. The improvement in 2012 has been brought about by a stronger focus

on the progress made by students of all abilities, more ambitious targets, more rigorous tracking of progress, extensive programmes of additional support that are well targeted at specific academic needs and more effective leadership of English and mathematics. Most parents and carers in the returned questionnaires said that their children are making good progress. Inspection evidence shows that although some students are making good progress, the progress made by the majority has been inconsistent.

Learning is satisfactory because not enough teaching is consistently good. In good or better lessons, students work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a science lesson they researched into micro-organisms, taught each other what they had discovered and drew their own conclusions. Students use peer and self-assessment well to develop their understanding, for example, in geography. At Key Stage 4, students value the additional small group learning which accelerates their academic progress.

Where learning was weaker, the students did not have the clear challenge of what they needed to do to succeed and activity focussed on completing a task rather learning a new skill. Practical activities engaged students but theoretical work was sometimes dull and routine and lacked inspiration and purpose. The higher ability students were not always challenged by questioning. Tasks did not provide sufficient opportunities to work creatively and independently.

Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory and improving. For the past three years students have made average progress at A and AS level from their starting points at GCSE. The first monitoring report of AS-level exams and A-level modules for the current year shows that, so far, students have made above average progress at both AS and A level. This improvement has been brought about by effective new leadership of the sixth form, including better guidance for students about their choice of courses. More accurate target setting has been introduced with rigorous tracking of progress and prompt identification of the need for additional academic support.

Quality of teaching

Most students and parents and carers from the returned questionnaires say teaching is good. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching observed by inspectors confirmed that teaching overall is satisfactory rather than good. Teaching in the additional support programmes is effective. In the sixth form, teaching has begun to have more impact as a result of the introduction of a new system for assessment and tracking which informs teachers and students of how well students are progressing.

In stronger teaching, engaging starter activities stimulate students' interest and provide clear direction, for example, by showing imaginative video clips. The teacher sets challenging expectations and is clear about what students should achieve in the lesson. Teachers' positive relationships with students are used effectively to develop good questioning and dialogue that extends understanding and promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good planning and the use of interactive tasks and resources enable academic subjects to be learnt in practical ways. Students have well-structured and challenging opportunities to take a lead in learning activities. Learning mentors are used well to support individuals and lead small group work with lower ability students, disabled students and those with special educational needs. Well-qualified teaching assistants make a strong contribution to accelerating the progress of Key Stage 4 students in mathematics and English.

In weaker lessons, there is a lack of pace and challenge. Opportunities are missed to stretch the higher ability students by planning more challenging tasks and extending their use of subject language and concepts. Practical work is not exploited well enough. For example, students' interest wanes when an effective starter or practical demonstration is followed by a mundane worksheet activity. Questioning is too often restricted to factual understanding and teachers miss opportunities to probe students' responses to provoke their thinking and deepen their understanding. Some good teaching in mathematics is planned well and provides effective support and challenge for students. Overall, however, the teaching in mathematics lessons is satisfactory due to weaknesses in the planning and pace of lessons and the quality of questioning which limits the progress of students. Too often students of differing ability complete the same tasks. The quality of marking is variable across subjects and does not provide consistently clear feedback about what skills students have demonstrated or what they need to do to improve.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most students and parents and carers agree that behaviour is good in school. A small minority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire do not believe it is good in lessons. Inspection evidence shows that students typically behave well in lessons and around the academy. They are courteous, good-natured and welcoming and have good relationships with each other and members of staff. They are ready and willing to learn, arrive promptly for lessons and disruption to lessons is unusual. In discussion, and in questionnaires, almost all students say they feel safe and this view is shared by parents and carers. Attendance is above average and the incidence of persistent absence is below average. Students are aware of the different types of bullying and say that it is a rare occurrence which is dealt with well. Good support is provided for students with behavioural difficulties and levels of exclusion are low. Students with special educational needs are monitored well and issues picked up quickly. Bespoke packages of support are designed well for individual students and effectively promote their personal development, their literacy skills and achievement. Behaviour is not outstanding because, in some lessons, students are passive and compliant with limited opportunity to demonstrate high levels of engagement and enthusiasm.

Leadership and management

The Principal and other senior and middle leaders demonstrate good drive and ambition for sustaining improvement in students' achievement. Members of the governing body are well-informed about the actions being taken to bring about improvement and they audit progress regularly. Leaders have taken a robust approach to improving weaknesses in achievement especially in mathematics. Performance management has been used effectively to move staff on and to tackle inadequacies in leadership and in teaching. This has resulted in improved performance in mathematics, English and the sixth form. A robust tracking system has been introduced with ambitious targets for progress of students at different levels of ability and detailed records of progress are now in place. These are regularly reviewed by senior and middle leaders and inform effective actions to improve learning. These improvements confirm the capacity to improve further.

There was a period since the previous inspection when improvement was not sustained and achievement declined. This coincided with a period when the Principal was routinely away

from school helping other schools to improve. During this school year, the Principal has remained in the academy and improvement has accelerated.

Leaders are securing improvements in the teaching by providing professional development opportunities that meet individuals' identified needs. Staff are motivated by the recent introduction of the 'learning revolution' designed to extend the range of teaching and learning styles and provide more challenge, particularly for the higher ability students. Judgements on the quality of teaching are increasingly well-informed by consideration of the progress being made by students. A procedure for systematically tracking the improvements made by teachers has recently been introduced. Further refinement is needed to more regularly inform the strategic management of teaching and learning. The system of summarising the quality of teaching with two grades for each individual leads to a lack of clarity and accuracy about the overall quality of teaching. As a result, the proportions of good and outstanding teaching identified by leaders are over-generous.

The good curriculum is responsive to the needs of students in the main school and sixth form and effectively promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The mix of academic and vocational courses engages students of all abilities, including those with disabilities and with special educational needs and is supported by good partnerships with other providers. Large numbers participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. An extensive programme of additional support, introduced this year, has improved equality of opportunity by narrowing the gaps in performance by different groups, including higher ability students and those known to be eligible for free school meals.

Subject leaders successfully involve parents and carers in discussing the progress of students at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Many parents and carers of students in Key Stage 3 commented in questionnaires on the need for parents' evenings with subject teachers. The academy has consulted with parents and carers and has recognised the need to improve the arrangements for parents' evenings at Key Stage 3 so that they can discuss their child's academic progress with subject teachers. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College, Ossett, WF5 0DG

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your academy. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. We came to the conclusion that the academy provides you with a satisfactory education and is improving. In your questionnaires you are positive about all aspects of the academy.

These were some of the main things we found in our inspection.

- Over the previous three years, achievement declined from good to satisfactory, and was inadequate in mathematics in 2011. In the current year, achievement has increased, with a significant improvement in mathematics. Achievement has been consistently satisfactory in the sixth form. Those of you in the sixth form are making improved progress this year.
- You are making better progress in examinations, partly because of the good additional support you receive. However, variations in the quality of lessons remain and we would like more teaching to be consistently good and outstanding.
- As you said in your questionnaires, behaviour is good. Your positive attitudes make a good contribution to teaching and learning. Attendance is above average and you say you feel safe from bullying.
- Effective leadership has improved students' performance in the current year. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to sustaining these improvements. The academy has a good capacity to improve.

To help the academy to improve, we have asked that senior leaders should:

- sustain the recent improvements in mathematics and English to ensure that, each year, you all make good progress from your different starting points, including in the sixth form
- improve the quality of teaching by improving the match of learning tasks to your needs, especially those of you who are of higher ability; using questioning more effectively to extend your thinking skills and improving the quality of marking and feedback to better inform you about how to improve
- increase the rigour in evaluating the quality of teaching.

I hope you all continue to rise to the challenge of meeting the targets you have been set.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

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