

# The Oldershaw Academy

Valkyrie Road , Wallasey, Wirral, CH45 4RJ

**Inspection dates** 8–9 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- From their individual starting points, the majority of students make good progress. Standards are rising quickly, particularly in mathematics where progress is rapid.
- Outstanding levels of care and support contribute well to students' enjoyment of school. Students feel safe and typically behave well.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding and this motivates students to work hard.
- The excellent curriculum is specifically tailored to meet the needs of individuals and makes a very effective contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students who access the Learning Centre make outstanding progress.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. Rigorous monitoring of the performance of different groups ensures that any potential underachievement is tackled vigorously.
- The headteacher's vision, passion and drive are key factors in the academy's success. The leadership team and governing body share and reflect the same qualities and values. Together they have created a demanding but supportive professional climate in the academy and have significantly improved the quality of teaching and, therefore, students' achievement.
- The sixth form is good. Students can join whatever their level of ability. In addition to traditional A levels, many students follow one-year vocational courses which prepare them well for the next stage of education or employment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' attainment in English is not as high as in mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Opportunities to extend learning are sometimes missed. Students are not always given sufficient opportunities to work on their own and think hard.
- Teachers' expectations about the quality and quantity of students' work vary. The quality of marking and feedback to students is inconsistent across subjects and a minority of students do not always respond to teachers' comments.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons. The great majority of teachers were seen.
- Meetings were held with Academy leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body, students and a representative of the local authority as well as an Academy improvement consultant.
- Documents relating to students' progress in their learning, and their behaviour, safety and attendance were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, its improvement planning and records relating to the performance management of staff. Inspectors looked at the work in students' books in a wide range of subjects.
- The views of parents were taken into account through the school's recent survey in March 2013 to which 41% of parents responded. There were insufficient responses on Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, to provide an analysis.
- Inspectors took account of staff opinions from direct discussions and an analysis of the 46 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Michael Cooper

Additional Inspector

Stephen Rowland

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Oldershaw Academy converted to become an academy school on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. When its predecessor school, The Oldershaw School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and has fewer girls than boys. The sixth form is smaller than average.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of students supported through school action and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average. In addition, the school has specially resourced provision, the Learning Centre, for up to 25 students with moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average and includes well over half the school. Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and the children of service families.
- A high proportion of students start at the academy later than Year 7 and some start as late as Year 11.
- A small number of students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 take part in study away from the school site on a part-time basis at Cornerstones Training and the Shaftesbury Centre. Other students follow David Campbell courses (football coaching) and MTEC courses (training in child care and cookery) which take place on the Oldershaw site. The academy has consortium arrangements with other local sixth forms to broaden the choice of options for students.
- In 2012, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy holds numerous awards in recognition of its work. These include British Council International status, centre of excellence for inclusion, e-learning centre of excellence, Artsmark gold, Sportsmark, and recognition as an Apple regional training centre and Toshiba training centre.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more lessons enthuse students and continue to raise levels of attainment, especially in English by:
  - making sure that students have sufficient time to work independently and to practise new skills
  - setting interesting tasks that make students think hard
  - making sure all teachers set equally high expectations for the quantity and quality of work in students' books
  - improving the quality of marking so that students always know how to improve the quality of their work, and making certain that all students respond positively to the comments made in their books
  - ensuring that all students who could benefit from them attend the additional support sessions offered by the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Results in the first year of the Academy, 2011-12 were not as high as the academy expected. Since that time, a vast amount of effort has been put in so that students now make progress at a much faster rate.
- All of the school data and inspection evidence is compelling. It indicates clearly that progress is good and attainment is rising strongly. This reflects the hard work of leaders and managers, teachers and other school staff and of the students themselves. Leaders analyse the data of different groups rigorously and can show for example, how the high student mobility impacted negatively on the 2012 examination results because these students had not been in the academy long enough to make sustained progress overtime.
- Attainment in English is not as high as in mathematics. This is generally as a result of the very low levels of literacy of many students when they start in Year 7. The school has used the Year 7 catch up premium, as well as other funding, to invest heavily in extra staffing and resources to raise standards of literacy and these measures are having a good impact on students' literacy levels. Students' targets in English are far higher this year and students are making good progress in English lessons towards meeting them.
- The students who join the school after Key Stage 3 have extra coaching and are taught in smaller groups. This helps them to learn quickly and make good progress. Students make particularly good progress in a range of subjects, including information and communication technology, drama, physical education, business studies, art and design and French. This is the case in Key Stages 3 and 4. Students enjoy the practical aspects of these subjects and good teaching enables them to do their best.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well and make consistently good progress because of the good quality extra help they receive in small teaching groups and some one-to-one sessions.
- Students who spend part of their time taught in the Learning Centre, make outstanding progress relative to their starting points. Most are well able to take full part in the main school lessons by the time they reach Year 9. Students spoken to were very positive about their experiences in the Learning Centre and felt it made them successful in lessons and confident in the main school.
- The achievement of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is improving because the investment of this funding in reduced class sizes and other measures is taking effect. The gap between the average points score (a measure of overall attainment) with other students in the school and similar students nationally, is closing securely and rapidly. In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals were four terms behind in English and three terms behind in mathematics.
- The students who are educated by other providers are sometimes on the school site and sometimes elsewhere. The academy checks carefully that they attend regularly teaching sessions wherever they occur and that they behave well. They generally make good progress so that they are keen to remain in full time education.
- The academy uses early entry in GCSE mathematics to support weaker candidates. Already 64% of students in the current Year 11 have already gained a grade C in mathematics. Nearly half the cohort will take the higher level paper in the summer of 2013 to try to improve on this grade. The use of early entry in the academy is promoting achievement, rather than restricting it.
- The majority of students enter the sixth form with much lower levels of attainment than is usually the case. Many follow one-year courses, which better equip them for the next stage of education. A smaller number than is generally the case continue on to A level after AS level. Students do well in this inclusive sixth form where they are nurtured and encouraged. From their starting points they make good progress. The proportion of students achieving A\*-B grades is rising.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The majority of lessons are well planned, provide plenty of challenge, ensure that students are actively involved right from the start of the lesson and learn effectively. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson, students were challenged to use their skills of deduction to work out from photographs, the extent of development in a series of countries across the world.
- Teachers use questioning well to make students think harder and develop their ideas and support their opinions. There is a strong sense of enjoyment in many lessons where students are very much involved in the activities planned. For example, in an outstanding drama lesson the onus was firmly placed on the students to describe what they have learned, this gives rise to a rapid pace of learning.
- Where teaching is outstanding, it is because the teacher has provided all students with different opportunities to achieve their best. This was seen in an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson in Year 10 where all students were totally involved, working at their own level and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Teaching in the Learning Centre is often outstanding because teachers have excellent knowledge of students' individual needs and plan lessons which set high expectations and provide the right level of support. In other classes, skilled teaching assistants provide good support for students who have special educational needs so that they make good, and often better, progress.
- The academy works diligently to promote the importance of literacy skills and the value of reading across all subjects. Nevertheless, weaker literacy and communication skills are evident in the lower levels of attainment in English than in mathematics. All departments include the development of literacy as a priority in lesson planning.
- In the few lessons where the pace of learning is slower, it is because long introductions restrict students' opportunities to work independently and to practise what they have learned. Sometimes, all the students are doing the same task so that it is too easy for some or too hard for others. Tasks are occasionally mundane and students are not always thinking for themselves.
- Marking in books is inconsistent in quality. Some teachers do not set high enough expectations for the quantity and quality of students' work and some do not give students enough advice on how they can improve their work and reach a higher grade.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students and their parents confirm that behaviour is typically good around the school at break and in lessons. On the rare occasions when there is poor behaviour, it is dealt with promptly and effectively by teachers and other staff.
- The academy runs its own alternative provision for students who might be in danger of permanent exclusion, which is very successful in getting them back into mainstream education as rapidly as possible. As a result, the academy has a history of no permanent exclusions. The academy has provided a safe haven for a number of students who have not been successful elsewhere.
- Students of all ages say that they feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers to support them in any difficulties. Students say that bullying is minimal. It is often just silly name calling and falling out between friends. Students are adamant that there is no racism or homophobic bullying and are aware of the dangers of the internet and cyber bullying through the information and communication technology (ICT) lessons.
- Students are proud of the academy and feel they are very well looked after and treated as individuals. The sixth form students support younger students in a number of ways, such as in paired reading sessions.
- The academy has an excellent range of partnerships and a strong track record in working with students and their families beyond school. Social care and police services speak highly of the school's commitment to every student. No-one is overlooked or left behind.
- Attendance has improved well and is in line with the national average. The proportion of

persistent absenteeism has fallen.

- Behaviour overall is not outstanding because a small number of students can be too casual in their attitudes to learning, only concentrating when directly observed by an adult. A minority complete minimal quantities of work in their books. Some fail to follow up the requests from teachers to repeat, complete or improve their work.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The outstanding commitment and leadership of the headteacher and his senior leadership team is resulting in rapid improvement in all aspects of the development of the academy, including the sixth form. Whatever the barriers to learning and achievement, the academy works diligently to find a solution. The exemplary system for measuring progress for all the different groups of students shows that from their various complex starting points, students are making faster progress and achieving better results. Leaders have raised standards, improved teaching and attendance and strengthened leadership at all levels. Partnerships with parents are exemplary because of the extensive measures taken by the academy to help them support their children's education.
- Good teaching is at the root of students' progress and achievement. The leadership of teaching and learning is highly effective so that all staff are fully committed to ensuring that progress improves year on year and equips students with the essential skills they need for a successful future.
- Performance management is effective in ensuring standards are rising, practice is developed where necessary and any increase in salary is linked to successful outcomes for students. For example, a focus on the mathematics department has been very successful in raising attainment and improving progress in mathematics. Senior leaders and the head of department have rigorously improved teaching across the department.
- Middle leaders are responsible for looking closely at data about students' progress and then planning strategies that improve outcomes for students in their areas of responsibility. They are fully involved in improving the school and all teachers know they are accountable for the progress students make in lessons and are keen to be involved in school improvement.
- Pupil premium funding is invested in accelerated reading courses, smaller classes, mentoring and one-to-one sessions for some students. It is also used to improve students' attendance, to develop courses for students who find learning difficult and providing a home-link worker to support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The Year 7 catch up premium is used mainly to provide additional support for reading. The gap is narrowing rapidly in the performance of students known to be entitled to this support and other students.
- The wide-ranging, inclusive curriculum is excellent. Students of all abilities are provided with courses that stretch and challenge them and equip them for later life. A recent innovation is the extra period 6 enrichment lesson at the end of the school day. This is used in a variety of ways for enrichment, coaching, one-to-one support, homework and coursework. However, some students who could benefit most from this support are not attending.
- Enrichment to broaden students' horizons comes in many forms such as, extra mathematics and English support, the library club, ICT, media and music clubs, many sporting opportunities and visits to Stratford upon Avon, the ballet, London and international visits through the Comenius project.
- The academy is in a consortium with other local secondary schools to broaden the range of subjects students can follow. The extra period 6 is also providing an opportunity to offer more choice to sixth formers.
- The academy chooses to use some of the local authority services to support the improvements in teaching and to provide additional training for governors.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are fully involved in the academy and have a very good awareness of its strengths and the challenges it faces. All governors are linked to departments and know what is being done to reward good teaching and how underperformance is tackled. They are skilled in using the data to compare the academy with other schools. They use the academy's rigorous tracking system to check on students' achievement and hold the senior leaders to account for the success or otherwise of their actions, challenging them to do better. They pay particular attention to the use of pupil premium funding to ensure it is benefiting the right students. Governors regularly undertake training to enable them to fully hold the academy to account. They are totally committed to, and proud of, The Oldershaw Academy.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136895
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	412528

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	781
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr I J Cubbin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S J Peach
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 638 2800
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