

Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College

Storrs Hill Road, Ossett, West Yorkshire, WF5 0DG

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards have risen sharply over the last two years. They are well above average and continue to rise.
- Students make good progress overall. In English progress is outstanding.
- Teaching is good and improving.
- In the sixth form, students achieve well. The standards they reach have risen to above average. Teaching is good and students show excellent attitudes to learning.
- There is a very caring, supportive and aspirational ethos in the academy, which students value. They behave well.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding and drive improvements in all aspects of the academy's work.
- Courses interest students, match their needs and aspirations and promote their good personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding.
- Information about students' achievement is not always used in planning teaching that promotes the rapid progress of all groups of students.
- Students' understanding of what they are learning is not consistently checked in lessons and the findings adapted to ensure that students always make at least good progress.
- Marking regularly includes advice about how to make further progress but students are not given sufficient time to respond to it in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 50 lessons, of which 13 were observed jointly with the principal or members of the senior leadership team. The inspectors observed students at break and lunchtimes and attended an assembly and tutor time.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, five groups of students, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- They analysed the 104 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and took the findings of the 52 staff questionnaires into account in conducting the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at the academy’s work, including its information about the standards and progress of different groups of students. They checked the academy’s records of the quality of teaching, looked at samples of students’ work, and analysed policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including those relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector
Stephen Rodchester	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much larger than the average-sized secondary school and is heavily oversubscribed.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- Well-below average proportions of students are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- It works in partnership with three other academies as part of The Yorkshire Education Trust. The academy provides support to a school in special measures.
- It has recently been accepted as a partner school to Newcastle University to prepare students for higher education.
- A very small proportion of students are educated at Wakefield College one day a week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching moves from good to outstanding and supports rapid progress by:
 - checking that teachers always use information about students' achievement in planning teaching and ensure that all groups of students are challenged appropriately
 - teachers checking thoroughly students' understanding of what they are learning throughout the lesson and adapting their teaching, based on their findings
 - giving students time to respond to the advice teachers give them when they mark their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards rose from significantly below average in 2011 to significantly above average in 2012 and 2013, in the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Standards are above average in most subjects and students' current work indicates they are likely to rise further in 2014. A greater proportion of students than in previous years achieved higher levels at GCSE. At A level, standards are above average.
- Good teaching, and some that is outstanding, results in a greater proportion of students than nationally making expected and better than expected progress throughout the academy, from their well-above average starting points. In English, progress is outstanding; in mathematics, it is good.
- The attainment of more-able boys dipped in 2013. The academy has addressed this through strategies such as single-sex teaching, and the standard of their work already points to their attainment being well above average in 2014. Boys' progress in mathematics, which fell in 2012, including for more-able boys, improved in 2013 and is in line with the progress of other students.
- All groups of students achieve similarly and make good progress. This includes disabled students and those who have special educational needs who make good progress through Key Stages 3 and 4 because they are identified quickly and relevant support for their needs is provided. The students who are educated off-site for one day each week also achieve well.
- Achievement is not outstanding overall because progress is not consistently rapid in all subjects.
- Any students who have not reached the expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 receive specific and very regular support to improve their reading and writing skills through the use of 'catch-up' funding in Year 7. Consequently, almost all such students make or exceed the progress expected of them.
- The school divides up the pupil premium funding it receives to provide learning mentors in English and mathematics, nurture groups and educational visits. In 2012, students eligible for free school meals were six terms behind other groups of students in English and five terms behind in mathematics. In 2013, the gap narrowed in English to four points. The attainment gap in mathematics remains a priority because it has not narrowed. However, the difference in the rate of progress has narrowed in both subjects over the last two years.
- Students sit mathematics GCSE as early as Year 8 and continue to sit it until they have achieved the best that they can. At all levels, students achieve more highly than students nationally. As a result, many students are studying further mathematics in Year 11.
- Students join the sixth form with below-average levels of attainment because it is open to students of all ability. Most complete their courses and go into further or higher education or employment at the end of Year 13. They make good progress through Years 12 and 13 and reach above-average standards.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. It is improving quickly because of very appropriate staff development to strengthen further the quality of teaching.
- Relationships between students and with staff are good and an important factor in students' enjoyment of learning and school.
- Where teaching is good or better, teaching holds students' attention because it involves and challenges them. There is a brisk pace and a good balance of teaching and independent learning.
- In the sixth form, most teachers act as facilitators to learning as they guide and question students. Thus, they make good progress in broadening their thinking and in evaluating critically

their learning and that of other students.

- Where teaching is excellent, teachers use very carefully data about the levels at which students are working. They do this both when planning lessons and when checking students' progress in the lesson to ensure that they make rapid progress. However, this is not consistently the case. Consequently, progress sometimes slows because work is either too easy or too difficult.
- Support for students is good whatever their needs. In Year 11, the organisation of tutor groups into subjects has resulted in students having extra time to practise skills in order to ensure they meet their targets. It includes a group for more-able students.
- Marking generally provides students with helpful and specific information about what they have learnt well and how to make further progress. It is more helpful in English, where it is a real strength, than in mathematics although in mathematics students do have regular opportunities to assess their own learning.
- Literacy is being incorporated into a range of subjects to enable students to practise their skills in different situations. The school is starting to plan opportunities for students to practise their numeracy skills across subjects in order for them also to transfer these skills to other situations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud of the academy and this is reflected in the mature behaviour of many students in lessons. However, when lessons are not well-matched to their needs, students' attitudes are sometimes less positive and their attention wanders.
- Behaviour around the site is commendable. Students show courtesy towards staff and visitors, and towards each other.
- Behaviour and attitudes in the sixth form are excellent. The sixth form students act as outstanding role models to the rest of the academy, including in their support of younger students' learning.
- Through the ethos of the academy which promotes respect for all and does not tolerate bullying, students feel safe. They speak confidently of how to keep safe in a range of situations, including the internet and cyber-bullying. Students can explain the negative impact of prejudice and discrimination on society and on peoples' well-being. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well on a daily basis and in a range of activities, including those to strengthen their awareness of the different lifestyles of people in other parts of the world.
- The academy provides a range of opportunities for students to be involved in running the academy and making decisions about its future. The headboy and headgirl meet with the governors to explain how they think the school could be improved and, as a result, the school council has been able to extend the lunch menu and provide extra outdoor seating. Students take roles as leaders of learning which are proving successful in developing students' broader skills and sustaining students' interest in learning.
- Attendance hovers around or slightly above the national average. The academy is strengthening and broadening its strategies to raise it to well above average. It continues to encourage students in a variety of ways to attend every day that the academy is open.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal leads a relentless drive to improve the academy's performance, based on accurate data to check the quality of teaching and students' achievement. He is ably supported by the vice-principal and other senior leaders, whose roles match accurately the needs of the academy, and by the governing body.
- Leadership at all levels is very effective: hence, the significant improvements in standards, the rate of progress, quality of teaching, and middle leadership. Leaders, and all staff, work as a team. Regular meetings and monitoring of performance in all areas ensure that the academy has a comprehensive overall picture of its effectiveness. Subject leaders' action plans are reviewed

against progress, so that improvement continues across all areas. This includes the quality of teaching and achievement of all groups of students in mathematics.

- The leadership of teaching is strong. Teaching is observed formally and regularly and staff share best practice within and between the partner academies. Leaders, including subject leaders, lead new developments in teaching and are increasing staff's expertise in both teaching and leadership. This strengthens the capacity of the academy for further improvements.
- The academy has effective procedures to set and check teachers' individual performance targets, which are mostly measureable and challenging.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Careful monitoring has led to the leader identifying and addressing any teaching and learning issues. Students praise the quality of academic guidance, including careers options.
- Students' positive attitudes to the academy and learning are due to courses and activities that promote well both their academic achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure its appropriateness. It includes regular advice about options after students have left school. Consequently, students have opportunities that match well their needs and aspirations and offer them equal chances to succeed in their learning. Students rate highly the range of after-school clubs and sports.
- The academy's caring and aspirational ethos is reflected in its support for all students, including those at risk of being vulnerable. Partnerships with academies and agencies help to make sure that students have all the guidance they need to be able to settle to learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Trust and governing body question the academy's performance comprehensively and probingly. The governors ensure that they find out information for themselves through, for example, discussions with subject leaders and their understanding of national data. They have a wide range of skills to support the academy's work. They make sure that safeguarding procedures, including for students educated off-site, meet the statutory requirements. The governors know how the academy's funding is spent, including that for students entitled to pupil premium funding, and check procedures to manage staff's performance. They support the school very well and are able to help it to move further forward.

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

Unique reference number	136462
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	425894

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	11–18
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 sixth form	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Drake
Headteacher	Martin Shevill
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2012
Telephone number	01924 232820
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	enquiries@ossettacademy.co.uk

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