

# Oldknow Academy

Oldknow Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 0HU

## Inspection dates

7–8 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leadership and management are inadequate. The chair and other governors exert too much control over operational matters in the academy.
- Governors do not meet their statutory responsibilities to safeguard pupils because they have not taken steps to protect them from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- A small group of governors is making significant changes to the ethos and culture of the academy without full consultation. They are endeavouring to promote a particular and narrow faith-based ideology in what is a maintained and non-faith academy.
- Many members of staff are afraid to speak out against the changes taking place in the academy.
- Recruitment arrangements are inadequate. There is lack of clarity about how appointments have been made.
- The academy is not adequately ensuring that pupils have opportunities to learn about faith in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural and religious traditions.
- Behaviour and safety are inadequate because pupils and staff are not equipped well enough to deal with the risk of extreme or intolerant views.
- Academy leaders and governors have not made sure that pupils are always safe on trips.

### The school has the following strengths

- All groups of pupils do well in their academic studies. By the time they leave the academy in Year 6, their attainment is at least in line with that of all schools nationally. Attainment in mathematics is particularly strong. Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching of core subjects is of high quality and leads to pupils making good and often outstanding progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They display exemplary behaviour to each other and to adults in the academy. They are polite, respectful and courteous to their friends, to staff and visitors. They have a clear knowledge of what is expected of them and are keen to live up to the academy's high expectations of behaviour.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are very happy with the academic education that their children receive.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It was subsequently deemed a section 5 inspection due to the extent of concerns surrounding safeguarding, leadership and management.
- Inspectors met with the substantive principal, the acting principal, the chair of governors and one other governor and members of staff. They spoke to pupils and met with a group of more than fifty parents. They spoke with external visitors to the academy. They reviewed 12 responses on Parent View and took account of a petition drawn up during the inspection by some members of staff.
- They scrutinised a wide range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings; reports to governors; financial data and documents relating to links with other academies.
- They reviewed the academy's procedures for keeping pupils safe, including behaviour, racist and other incident logs and attendance and exclusion data.
- Inspectors visited 11 lessons or parts of lesson and one assembly. They reviewed class timetables, looked at pupils' books and heard a small number of pupils read. The academy's most up-to-date data on progress made by pupils currently in the academy was not available due to a technical fault.

## Inspection team

Angela Westington, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Margaret Farrow	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Taylor-Bennett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Cook	Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- Oldknow Academy is twice the size of the average primary academy.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the academy receives the pupil premium (additional funding to support the learning of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is twice the national figure.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- Virtually all pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The largest groups are Pakistani (43%), Bangladeshi (27%) and Black African (17%). The great majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the government's floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, several key staff have left the academy and/or been on sickness leave. Of the senior leadership team at the last inspection, only one person remains. This person has recently returned following serious illness. The substantive principal is not working at the academy currently.

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

- As a matter of urgency, ensure a full review of governance with a particular focus on the suitability of those acting as governors.
- Review the financial probity at the academy and employment procedures.
- Secure stability in the leadership of the academy.
- Improve the quality of education by ensuring that a broad and balanced curriculum, including religious education, equips pupils to live and work in a multi-cultural, multi-faith and democratic Britain and to develop tolerance towards peoples of all faiths and all cultures.
- Safeguard students better by:
  - improving staff and governors' understanding of, and commitment to, their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe
  - ensuring that staff and governors undertake extensive training in how to identify risk to pupils from extreme or radical views
  - ensuring any plans to alter the ethos, culture and values of the academy are widely consulted on and better understood.
- Improve communication with parents so that they understand why decisions are made in the academy.
- Ensure that all staff are consulted about aspects of academy life and proposed changes.

Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress in academic subjects during their time at the academy. Typically, they enter the academy in Year 3 with attainment that is often well below average. By the time they leave in Year 6 their attainment is at least in line with all schools nationally. Attainment in mathematics is particularly strong.
- Pupils' outstanding progress is due to teaching that is typically of a very high quality and because they have exceptionally positive attitudes in lessons and are keen to participate and do well.
- Over time, all groups of pupils make very good progress and pupils eligible for the pupil premium make exceptionally good progress. There is virtually no gap in the standards reached by these pupils and their classmates at age 11, in reading, writing and mathematics. In this academy, pupils eligible for the pupil premium outperform similar pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make extremely good progress from their starting points, especially in reading and writing.
- Evidence from teachers' regular assessment information on classroom walls, pupils' books and observations of learning during the inspection show that pupils make rapid progress in their lessons, in all year groups and across subjects. Pupils like the assessment grids at the front of their books and could explain in detail how they help them to focus on making their work better.
- Literacy, mathematics and topic books show high achievement in all these subjects with good concentration on the use of correct technical vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling.
- Displays of pupils' high quality writing decorate the academy. They show just how well pupils achieve across a wide range of subjects. Improvement has been particularly noticeable in Year 5 as a result of the reorganisation of the class groups.
- In every lesson observed, pupils were keen to talk about their work and displayed pride in their learning and their books.
- Pupils read widely and often. They read confidently and proudly to staff and visitors in lessons and show their good application of strategies taught to master even the most complex words. Pupils take good advantage of the extensive, inviting library that provides a rich array of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Good use has been made of the government's sports funding to provide additional clubs after school and Saturday clubs. The activities make a good impact on all pupils' enjoyment of sport, particularly pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are very happy with the academic progress their children make.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- The impact of teaching over time is leading to pupils making at least good and often outstanding progress. Recent changes to the groupings in, for example, Year 5 and the stronger focus on reading and literacy across all subjects have been beneficial. Lessons are carefully planned with a strong focus on ensuring that pupils can practise and develop their literacy skills in subjects other than English.
- Staff's high expectations ensure that pupils are stretched to achieve their best. For example, in one Year 3 mathematics lesson, a low ability group read complex scales with confidence and fluency. Year 4 pupils spoke powerfully of how they love their mathematics lessons. They proudly displayed how well they know their 13 times tables and showed inspectors the neat and well-presented work in their books.
- Teaching is typified by teachers' good questioning that challenges pupils well and enables them to think things through for themselves. Pupils speak confidently about their work and their learning.
- Teaching assistants are usually well deployed. Along with teachers they move around the classroom, judiciously offering a good balance of support when pupils are unclear and then challenging them to quickly move them on to the next level.
- Books are very well marked. Pupils say they value the comment and colour coded marking system. This helps them to know what they are doing well and the precise steps they need to take to improve their work or to tackle things they have misunderstood.

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

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is inadequate. The governing body does not give pupils' safety a high enough priority. They are unable to ensure that pupils are kept safe from any extreme or radical views they encounter because they do not consider this is an appropriate topic for primary school pupils. Pupils and staff are poorly equipped to understand, respond to or calculate risks associated with extreme or intolerant views.
- Leaders have not assessed adequately the risks to pupils associated with trips, visitors and links with other institutions. For example, the academy has links with a school in Saudi Arabia but could not tell inspectors whether risk assessment had been carried out on the people or materials that pupils may come into contact with.
- The arrangements of the newly introduced second Islamic assembly, led and supervised only by the acting principal with no other adults present, are unsatisfactory.
- Leaders do not take sufficient action to prevent discriminatory language other than the use of racist language. The academy has recently rewritten its policy to tackle this issue but it is not being implemented. As a consequence, the academy does not meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Plans are in place to train staff on all issues of equality.
- The grounds of the academy are secure but parts are unkempt. Although fenced off, parts of the farm area are full of broken wooden furniture, fencing and overgrown vegetation. Uneven pathways from teaching block to teaching block pose an unnecessary risk to the safety of pupils and staff.

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have highly positive attitudes to learning and are extremely proud of their achievements. They understand how to behave well and take a pleasure in doing so, in class and as they move around the building. They wear their uniforms with pride.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and courteous to their friends, to staff and visitors. They have a clear knowledge of what is expected of them and are keen to live up to the academy's high expectations.
- Pupils say they enjoy their time at Oldknow and this can be seen in their very high attendance rates and rapid progress. Exclusions are low.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. They feel well taught about risks to their personal safety including e-safety. They are less sure about risks of prejudice based bullying other than racist bullying.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were confident that their children are safe. Pupils report they feel safe and well cared for and know any adult will support them in times of need.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Concerns have been expressed by staff and some parents about the rapid changes in the leadership team since January 2013. The current leadership of the academy is failing to provide an adequate education because there are significant omissions in safeguarding and in pupils' cultural development. The substantive headteacher has played an important role in raising academic achievement since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum is inadequate because it does not foster an appreciation of, and respect for, pupils' own or other cultures. It does not promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. In addition, a small group of governors is making significant changes to the ethos and culture of the academy without full consultation. They are endeavouring to promote a particular and narrow faith-based ideology in what is a maintained and non-faith academy.
- Some staff told Her Majesty's Inspectors that they feel afraid to speak out against recent changes in the academy for fear of losing their jobs.
- Recruitment and performance management arrangements are inadequate. There is a lack of clarity about how staff were appointed to temporary leadership roles in the academy. Some staff have been promoted despite limited experience. In addition, the central record which includes checks on staff recruited to the academy is not up to date. During the inspection, staff reported to Her Majesty's Inspectors that recruitment to posts is neither fair nor open. They believe that decisions to recruit, appoint and promote staff are made outside of the academy.
- The academy's leaders and governors have high expectations for the pupils' academic achievement. They ensure that pupils are prepared very well, academically, for the next steps in their education.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and systematic. Governors receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and on the performance of all staff.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governance is inadequate. Governors are not fulfilling all of the terms and conditions of the academy’s funding agreement.
- The Determination awarded to the academy in January 2008, exempting the academy from having a daily, broadly Christian act of worship, expired in January 2013 and was not renewed.
- Currently, the academy has two Islamic faith assemblies each week and additional, optional Friday prayer. Birmingham City Mission has been delivering Christian Acts of Collective Worship at Oldknow, once a term, since 2006. Its recent assembly was cancelled and the Mission’s offer of an alternative date was not taken up. No further visits have been requested. The academy’s Christmas special assembly was also cancelled.
- During a recent academy fête, raffles and tombolas were banned because they are considered un-Islamic.
- Inspectors found that important decisions are being made by a small number of governors, including the Chair of Governors, rather than by the governing body collectively. Governors, especially the Chair of Governors, exert too much influence in the day-to-day running of the academy.
- Not all visitors to the academy are recorded on the electronic system.
- Governors have used the academy’s budget to subsidise a trip to Saudi Arabia for only Muslim staff and pupils. The choice of destination meant that pupils from other faiths were not able to join the trip. Governors who accompany the trip are paid for from the academy budget. Inspectors were told that in 2013 a relative of the academy’s governor joined the trip from Pakistan without the necessary checks having been made.
- During the inspection senior leaders told Her Majesty’s Inspectors that a madrasa had been established in the academy and had been paid for from the academy’s budget. This was not in operation at the time of the inspection.
- The governing body holds the academy to account for the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. Governors are very aware of teachers’ performance. However, salary rises and promotion are not managed in an open and transparent way.
- Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and how well pupils for whom the academy receives the additional funding are doing. The academy’s website lists a wide range of measures on which the funding is spent.

## 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>	138052
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	444851

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	600
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Achmad Da Costa
<b>Principal</b>	Bhupinder Kondal
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 8771
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