

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 October 2018

Ms Tina Lee
Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey
Minster Road
Minster-on-Sea
Kent
ME12 3JQ

Dear Ms Lee

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

Following my visit to your school on 8 October 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections since joining Oasis Community Learning in January 2014.

Senior leaders, governors and officers from Oasis Community Learning are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- the recent rapid improvements in curriculum design and in the quality of teaching lead to faster rates of progress for current pupils
- overall rates of attendance match those seen nationally in secondary schools.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, members of your senior leadership team, the regional director, the regional lead principal and a range of senior officers representing Oasis Community Learning at regional and national levels. I also met with members of the trust improvement group, which is responsible for governance in the school. In addition, I spoke to groups of middle leaders, staff and pupils.

Accompanied by senior leaders, I visited classrooms on both campuses and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work. I reviewed safeguarding procedures at the school and took account of documents provided by leaders, including the school's rapid improvement plan.

Context

You were appointed acting principal in April 2018, following the departure of the previous principal. You were confirmed as permanent principal in June 2018.

Main findings

Since your appointment, you have lost no time in sharpening management systems, improving teaching and clarifying roles and responsibilities. Aided by your senior leadership team and senior officers from the trust, you have taken effective action to review the curriculum and further strengthen the school's approach to managing behaviour.

Morale among teachers spoken to is high. They feel valued by leaders and believe that the training they receive is well matched to their needs. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to give clear explanations, set challenging tasks and ask probing questions that require pupils to explain their ideas. As a result, pupils pay attention in lessons and take pride in their work. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to improve their work in response to the feedback they receive from their teachers.

You have rightly given a high priority to improving curriculum and assessment arrangements. Supported by leaders and subject experts from Oasis South Bank Academy, you have put in place a more challenging and engaging five-year curriculum. For example, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, extend their learning by writing accurately and at length in English, humanities and French. In mathematics and science, the curriculum focuses on ensuring that pupils are fluent in the basics before moving on. The new approach to assessment is already helping pupils to remember important information so that they can recall it in the future. Subject leaders relish these changes and have acted with vigour and urgency to ensure that teachers have the support they need to teach the new curriculum and assess pupils' progress accurately.

Staff and pupils agree that there have been significant improvements in behaviour since you took up your post. The school is now calm and orderly. Pupils move around the buildings sensibly, particularly when supervised by their teachers. Teachers follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils look smart in their uniforms, keep the site free from litter and are polite to visitors. Pupils say that lessons are now only occasionally disrupted by poor behaviour.

Despite leaders' best efforts and support from Oasis South Bank Academy, overall rates of absence and persistent absence remain higher than those seen nationally in

secondary schools. However, attendance is slowly improving, and leaders have had considerable success in promoting regular attendance among vulnerable pupils who attend on-site alternative provision in The Bridge.

Most of the changes you implemented on your appointment had not been in place long enough to have an impact by the time pupils sat their GCSE examinations last summer. As a result, early signs are that pupils' progress in 2018 was below the national average, as it was in 2017. However, as in previous years, pupils did well in vocational subjects both at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Destination figures are now broadly in line with those found nationally, suggesting that pupils are being increasingly well prepared for their next steps.

You have successfully established a renewed sense of purpose, which is shared by staff and pupils. However, you and officers from the trust recognise that recent improvements quickly need to translate into sustained improvements in outcomes for pupils. Consequently, oversight of the school by the trust has been strengthened. The regional director and members of the trust improvement group have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Performance management arrangements are sharper and the rapid improvement plan is fit for purpose. Consequently, those responsible for governance are now better able to hold leaders stringently to account for the impact of their actions.

External support

The trust has wisely increased the level of support and challenge it makes available to the school in recent months. The regional director and regional lead principal have been successful in providing well-received support for teaching, leadership and the curriculum. Leaders and teachers particularly value the partnership with the Oasis Academy South Bank as it gives them access to coaching and mentoring support from senior leaders and subject experts.

I am copying this letter to the regional director for Oasis Community Learning, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gary Holden
Her Majesty's Inspector