

Oasis Academy Skinner Street

Skinner Street, Gillingham ME7 1LG

Inspection dates 22–23 June 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has significantly improved since the last inspection and now provides a good standard of education for its pupils.
- The principal provides strong leadership, supported by highly able leaders. Leaders have very high expectations of all staff and inspire all to give their best for the pupils. This has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and good outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils thrive because they are very well cared for in a nurturing and encouraging environment that puts their needs first. As a result, behaviour is good.
- The interim executive board and Oasis Community Learning provide highly effective support and challenge to the school. They have been steadfast in their determination to resource strong leadership for the school. Consequently, the school has gone from strength to strength.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points, including pupils who have a special educational need or disability, the most able, and pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils in Year 6 have made exceptional progress during the last year to make up lost ground.
- Children make strides in their learning when they start their education because of the exceptional care, and opportunities pupils have to build skills across all areas of learning in the early years.
- Teachers make good use of information about what pupils know and can do already to plan what they need to do next. They make learning fun, engaging and relevant.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. British values are woven throughout the school's curriculum and embedded in its ethos. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not consistently given opportunities to apply what they know in depth, especially in mathematics and in phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Attendance, although improving, is still below average.
- Pupils do not consistently have the opportunity to improve their own work.
- Teaching across all subjects is not as strong as in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Despite improved rates of progress across the school, pupils' achievement could be even better.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should continue to improve the quality of teaching towards outstanding so that standards continue to rise, by:
 - providing pupils with greater opportunities to solve problems in mathematics, thereby deepening their understanding and ability to apply what they know
 - ensuring that pupils have more chances to apply their knowledge in a range of ways when they are learning phonics
 - making sure that pupils are given the skills to improve and edit their own work, especially in writing
 - ensuring that all teachers further develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects taught across all areas of the curriculum to ensure that pupils are consistently challenged
 - continuing to increase the proportion of pupils who are secondary ready by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6
 - increasing the proportion of pupils, especially boys, reaching the highest levels of achievement in English and mathematics, across all key stages.

- Improve attendance so that it is at least at the national average by working with families to reduce the number of pupils who take too much time off school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders have driven improvement and effected transformation in the quality of education that the school provides since the time of the previous inspection.
- School leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school in fine detail and use this information to precisely target areas for improvement. The rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work is testament to leaders' relentless focus on what needs to be done and doing it quickly.
- The school development plan is sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement, underpinned by timescales for actions so that leaders can make sure that improvement is happening.
- The principal has instilled a culture of high expectations that has cascaded throughout the school and consequently, leaders, including governors, are driven to continually improve. Staff are united in their high aspirations for pupils and their families.
- Middle leaders make a significant contribution to raising the quality of teaching in the phases that they are responsible for. They are enthusiastic and confident in their roles. They value the opportunities and support given to them by senior leaders. Consequently, they have flourished and are excellent role models to other staff.
- Leaders have rigorous systems in place to check that teaching is helping pupils to make good progress in their learning. Leaders have improved the quality of teaching across the school. The standard of teaching is consistently good and some teaching is outstanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has rigorous and highly effective systems for managing the performance of teachers, including those who are new to teaching. Training and development are used very well to provide staff with the necessary skills to improve their practice. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that teaching is consistently strong across the curriculum so that pupils make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Assessment procedures are in place to track the new curriculum introduced in 2014. This is being used systematically by staff to bring about rapid improvements in outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. Leaders have been proactive in seeking external moderation across all key stages to make certain that teachers' judgments about how well pupils are doing are correct. Despite improved rates of progress across the school, pupils' achievement could be even better. Too few pupils reach the highest levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The needs of pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding are well met because leaders are ambitious for them to achieve well. The additional funding given by the government is allocated effectively to ensure that the academic, emotional and social needs of pupils are provided for. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress and are working at broadly similar levels to other pupils in the school. They now achieve more highly in phonics and by the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The leadership and management of support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, and pupils who are learning English is good. The inclusion team closely monitor interventions to make certain they are making a difference. For that reason, pupils make good progress from their starting points and some reach levels of attainment beyond that expected for their age.
- The range of subjects offered to pupils is broad. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to engage with exciting activities and trips that make learning meaningful and fun. Lessons are well-planned to provide an interesting range of learning experiences. During this inspection the whole of Year 5 attended Mid Kent College to participate in activities based on engineering and technology. Subsequently, pupils are motivated and engaged.
- Leaders have considered carefully the links between the school's 'nine habits' and fundamental British values. The principal seeks ways to practically introduce these in a meaningful way. For example, through studying the EU referendum within a range of subjects; through trips to London institutions such as the Tower of London, and through studying books that help pupils to become more socially aware, on themes such as the plight of refugees.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning is threaded seamlessly throughout the curriculum and underpinned by the school's aims that revolve around 'golden' expectations of behaviour and learning. Importantly, staff model the values they expect from pupils extremely well.

- Sports funding is used appropriately and has impacted on pupils' engagement. This is reinforced by the school's drive towards achieving healthy school's status. Pupils are participating in the Medway and Kent youth games for the first time and this is indicative of the improvements made in this area. Pupils' access to sport and physical activity has more than doubled as a result of initiatives introduced by school leaders.
- There are good systems in place to ensure that the school is a well-ordered and safe place where everyone knows precisely what they should be doing and why. This is because school policies are effectively and consistently implemented.
- Parents' views about the school are overwhelmingly positive. Parents value the communication and approachability of staff. They feel welcome and say that their children are helped to settle and quickly make progress, including the most able. Parents particularly appreciate the additional support the school provides for their children and themselves in times of difficulty. Consequently, the number of pupils attending the school is rising and there is a waiting list for Reception Year in September 2016.
- Leaders have fostered an inclusive environment with equality of opportunity at the heart of the school's ethos and values. The needs of the community in which they serve underpin the work of the school and leaders contribute to pupils' safety and well-being across Medway. For instance, school leaders are running a summer camp for pupils in Medway who are at risk of permanent exclusion when they start secondary school. The local authority values the relationship they have with the school because leaders are outward looking and make a difference to the lives of pupils in Medway.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Those responsible for governance share leaders' vision for the future of the school and make a strong contribution to strategic leadership.
 - The interim executive committee discharge their statutory duties well, including those relating to safeguarding. They are well-informed and knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and what needs to be developed further. They have endeavoured to widen their own skills and expertise so that they can offer increasingly effective challenge and support to school leaders. Due to the structure of governance in Oasis Community Learning, the committee have struck a balance between operational and strategic influence.
 - The primary regional academy director has used her considerable expertise and experience in education to challenge and support the school. She works in collaboration with school leaders to propel school improvement. This adds to the capacity of the school to develop further. The layers of accountability within governance are robust.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. This is underpinned by the depth of knowledge staff have about all pupils, who are nurtured in a caring environment. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos. Leaders have worked hard to engage wider expertise to help pupils in need of additional support. Thorough checks are made on adults when they work or volunteer at the school and staff are well trained in child protection procedures.
- Staff are knowledgeable about current social issues such as female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation and have exercised their duty of care when pupils are at risk from harm. Leaders have doggedly followed the child missing in education protocol to ensure that pupils are receiving education. The school is diligent and unwavering in their pursuit of pupils' safety. Thus, pupils say they feel safe and they are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- The rapid improvement in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics is because the quality of teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers plan very carefully, taking into account, and building on, what pupils know already. As a result, pupils make good progress, especially the most able and disadvantaged.
- Lessons are lively, engaging and interesting. Teachers make good links between subjects to make learning more relevant. Teachers plan exciting trips and events to make learning fun so that pupils are enthused to learn. For example, Year 3 pupils created posters advertising Mexican food after sampling a range of tastes, such as tortillas and salsa.
- Targeted support focused on specific areas of learning, known as interventions, rapidly close gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding across reading, writing and mathematics. Interventions are planned and delivered effectively, and evaluated to ensure that they are making a difference.

- Pupils understand what they are learning to do and why. This is because learning intentions are explained well and pupils are clear about what they need to do to achieve well. They receive valuable information about how to improve their learning. Pupils use this information to make their work even better. However, pupils do not consistently demonstrate the confidence to improve their own work without prompting by adults.
- Pupils commonly use prompts and resources to strengthen their learning, such as dictionaries, word pyramids and working walls. However, very occasionally pupils do not have access to the resources they need to complete tasks successfully in mathematics.
- Most adults use good questioning skills to prompt and encourage pupils to think and reason for themselves. Consequently, pupils are able to explain the strategies they use to tackle their work and can express their opinions in a logical and systematic way.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and therefore progress is good. Pupils spell well, use a range of interesting vocabulary, and write increasingly sophisticated sentences. As a result, one pupil wrote, 'As the murky waves overlapped each other, the racing sea thrashed against jagged rocks'. The most able pupils write copiously and well. There has been significant improvement in pupils' handwriting and pupils take pride in their work. There is emerging evidence that pupils can improve their writing by drafting and editing but pupils are not consistently given these opportunities to make their writing even better.
- Early reading skills are taught well and consequently pupils can break down words to help them read. Year 2 pupils, for example, can read words such as, exhibiting, majestic, and savannah. Pupils make good progress in reading as a result, especially lower-ability pupils. Pupils use their phonics to help them spell words with increasing accuracy across all age groups and subjects. Occasionally, pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise and embed their phonics when new digraphs or trigraphs are introduced. Teachers are unable to capture what pupils know and understand as a result.
- The school has worked effectively to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Pupils have access to high quality texts in English lessons, such as 'The iron man' by Ted Hughes. Pupils were asked to create 'reading dens' for homework which ignited their imaginations. Dens were built from pillows, on the bottom of bunkbeds and even inside tree houses! Pupils took part in a 'readathon' to buy books for a planned school library. Now, pupils are using reading texts to help them improve their writing and say they love reading.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has significantly improved. Pupils are taught the most effective ways of approaching their learning. They are provided with activities that strengthen their ability to reason. During this inspection, Year 2 pupils grappled to understand how pictograms can be used when one picture represents more than a single item.
- Pupils are able to tackle increasingly complex operations using a range of mathematical functions, such as multiplication and division. Despite this, there is less evidence that pupils apply what they know to solve mathematical problems which would help them to deepen their understanding and reach the highest levels of attainment.
- All adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are very skilful in ensuring that all pupils are engaged and understand how to become resilient learners. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils, enable learning to take place in an atmosphere of trust where pupils feel able to take risks and seek support when they need it.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics is very strong and pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers' subject knowledge in other areas of the curriculum such as science and art is not as strong. This means that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in these areas are not as solidly developed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite, empathetic, well-considered and thoughtful because they are encircled in an environment that exudes care and places them at the very heart of what it does.

- Pupils demonstrate the school's nine values that permeate throughout the school and underpin British values. As a result, pupils are kind, respectful and appreciative. The positive regard they have for each other and for adults is palpable. For example, pupils are thankful for the sacrifice that staff made when they changed the car park into additional playground space to improve playground behaviour and reduce accidents.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know that adults will help them if they have any concerns. Parents say that their children are helped to settle quickly and rapidly gain confidence as a result of the positive atmosphere and level of care provided by the school.
- Leaders have been quick to identify ways that to improve pupils' welfare. For instance, lunchtimes have been transformed to truly social occasions by reducing the numbers of pupils in the lunch hall at one time, and by adorning tables with chequered cloths.
- Leaders frequently go beyond what is expected of them to ensure that pupils and their families are well supported. For example, the school offers a summer school for Year 6 pupils who have not met the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. This is just one example of how the school ensures that pupils have the best opportunities in life.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are quickly improving. Consequently, pupils are becoming more resilient and persevere in their work. However, pupils' self-help skills and ability to improve their own learning are not as strong, which sometimes diminishes the progress they make.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Routines and expectations are well established, focusing on the development of the whole child, and these result in a calm and safe environment. No incidents of disruptive behaviour were observed, either in lessons or during breaktime and lunch.
- The school has a system for managing behaviour with appropriate rewards and sanctions in place which staff consistently implement. School leaders carefully analyse information about behaviour patterns and trends to target support for vulnerable pupils. As a result, there has been a significant fall in incidents of inappropriate behaviour this year. In addition, there has been a significant reduction in the proportion of pupils who receive fixed-term exclusions for more serious breaches of behaviour.
- The number of pupils who require support to manage their behaviour has fallen this year. Where there is support by school staff and other professionals, it has a positive impact on pupils' ability to focus on their learning and to make progress.
- Racial and bullying incidents are exceptionally rare and dealt with appropriately by adults. Pupils insist that bullying does not happen and adults will sort out any problems that may occur. Pupils are taught to care and have compassion and are quick to challenge any unkind or inappropriate behaviour.
- The school has worked hard to make sure that pupils attend school every day. Despite implementing a range of strategies and working closely with the parents, attendance levels remain stubbornly just below the national average but there are signs that this is improving. A small number of pupils take too many days off school which impacts on their ability to learn and make as much progress as they could.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders and all adults understand performance information well and use this to prioritise actions that improve pupils' attainment. Current assessment systems, introduced by school leaders, are rigorous. Information about how well pupils are doing is checked frequently to ensure that pupils at risk from falling behind are identified swiftly and support is put in place. Hence, pupils acquire reading, writing and mathematical skills quickly.
- Pupils who sometimes struggle with their work are targeted through planning which is monitored weekly to check that plans are implemented and impacting on learning. A high proportion of pupils are supported to move from working below the standards expected for their age to working at least within the standards expected. This shows the strong progress that pupils make.
- This is further exemplified by the progress of current Year 2 pupils since the end of Reception Year. The number working at the expected standard for their age has more than doubled. Furthermore, 60% of Year 5 pupils who were working below the standard expected at the end of Year 2 are now are working at the level of achievement expected for their age.

- The majority of pupils have already made the progress expected by the end of the academic year and a large proportion have made greater than expected progress, especially in upper key stage 2 where pupils have filled gaps in their learning. Progress in writing has been particularly strong and Year 6 pupils have made the equivalent of three years' progress since September 2015. Despite this strong progress, pupils' achievement could be even better.
- Nonetheless, there has been significant improvement in pupils' achievement at key stage 1 and key stage 2, even taking into account the raised expectations of the national curriculum. The progress and achievement of pupils who are disadvantaged is broadly similar to other pupils and gaps between their achievement and pupils nationally are closing. This strengthening achievement could be enhanced further by raising the proportion of pupils that reach the highest levels of achievement in all key stages, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years is above the national average. Children who are disadvantaged do even better than the other pupils in the school. Because of this, children have a good start to their education.
- Pupils learn phonics well and as a result, an increasing proportion of pupils achieve the standard expected in the phonics screening test by the end of Year 1. Disadvantaged pupils do as well as other pupils in the school. Linking sounds to letters is modelled effectively by all staff. Leaders know that this good start needs to be built on so that even more pupils reach the expected standards by the end of key stage 1.
- Pupils who are learning English are supported well by highly trained and able staff to quickly improve their vocabulary and communication skills. This provides them with the skills they need to rapidly make progress from their various starting points.
- The most able pupils make good progress. Most-able pupils are using dialogue to reason and develop a deeper understanding of mathematics. Prior lower attaining pupils and those who are learning English as an additional language sometimes make accelerated progress to become the most able learners. Most-able boys in Year 4 who are at risk from underachieving have been targeted to make accelerated progress so that they reach the high levels of achievement they are capable of making.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has a significant impact and these pupils are making good progress from their various starting points. Each pupil's achievement and progress is examined by leaders to ensure that they are receiving the best possible support. Because of the high level of extra help they receive, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported to make effective transitions as they move through the school.
- Boys are achieving well in Year 2 and are outperforming girls. However, this is not the pattern across the school because girls usually achieve more highly than boys. Leaders have made a speedy response to this and are diligently exploring ways to raise boys' attainment. Still more work needs to be done to increase the proportion of boys working at expected levels and, particularly, the number who reach the highest levels of attainment.

Early years provision

is good

- The new early years leader, ably supported by senior leaders, is effective and has a clear focus on areas for development. Leaders have built a strong team who share a common vision. Children are safe and content because their well-being and safety is a priority. All safeguarding procedures are robust.
- Leaders help children to make a smooth transition into Reception Year by visiting the nine feeder nursery providers and all children's family homes. This helps them quickly assess children's skills and abilities when they enter the school. This information is used to plan activities to meet children's needs so that children can make good progress across all areas of learning.
- Children start the early years with knowledge and skills which are generally well below those normally expected of this age group. Nonetheless, children are given an excellent start to school and make rapid progress, including pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding. This year, the achievement of this group of children has exceeded other pupils in the school.
- All staff have high expectations of children's achievement to give them the best possible start to their school lives. By the end of the early years the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above the national average, ensuring that children are well prepared to start in Year 1.
- Teaching is strong because it is highly focused on moving children forward in their learning. Teachers use performance information to hone in on reasons why children are not progressing and because of this they are quickly helped to move forwards.

- Phonics is taught well in the early years. There is evidence of even the youngest children applying phonics to read and to spell.
- Teachers make learning enjoyable. During the inspection children came into school to find that their climbing frame had disappeared and the area where it stood had been 'vandalised'. The area was strewn with paint and bright feathers. Children immediately searched for clues to identify the culprit, one exclaiming, 'The guinea pig did it!', while others looked at the feathers and thought a gigantic parrot had flown away with the equipment. One child told the inspector that they had seen the parrot on their balcony the night before. Children were immersed in learning.
- Children are able to work on their own and sustain interest because the range of activities provided for them across the learning areas are engaging. The learning environment is well-structured indoors and outdoors to provide children with experiences that are highly motivating and inspirational, to forge a real sense of anticipation in the children. A new 'mud kitchen', 'water wall', writing shed and pet corner have added to the range of activities available to children.
- Opportunities for children to develop their writing and mathematics are particularly strong and threaded well into most activities. For instance, children could choose to play 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' because plastic clocks were available for them to help them practise time. Despite this, reading books do not help pupils to decode words, and therefore, access books on their own. Leaders have taken swift action to address this by purchasing new reading materials.
- Children happily and articulately communicate with adults who challenge them to think and ask them to talk about what they are learning about and how they are doing it.
- Children behave well and interact positively with one another. They follow instructions quickly because of strong relationships between adults and children. Children are happy and parents are very positive about their child's experience in the early years.
- School leaders have worked hard to develop a positive rapport with parents and to communicate effectively about the progress their children are making. Parents are invited to engage with their child's learning but as yet, there are no formal opportunities for parents to inform teachers about the progress their child is making at home.

School details

Unique reference number	140040
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10012707

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	Interim executive committee
Chair	Rosemary Jennings
Principal	Dan Morrow
Telephone number	01634 850213
Website	www.oasisacademyskinnerstreet.org
Email address	office@oasis Skinner Street.org
Date of previous inspection	3–4 March 2015 and 23 April 2015

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Skinner Street converted to an academy in September 2013. The school is a larger than average-sized primary school located in a residential area of Gillingham.
- Nearly half of all pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority). This is double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is also well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, with the largest proportion from African heritage. The majority of pupils, approximately 57%, are White British. Over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average.
- Children in Reception attend full time.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school throughout the year.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governance of the school is organised in two parts. At a local level, an interim executive committee acts as a critical friend to the principal and undertakes both an operational and strategic role in challenging and supporting school leaders. It oversees the well-being and safety of pupils, including their achievement, behaviour and attendance. Oasis Community Learning's board provides national governance, consisting of the chief executive officer and regional academy directors. This board oversees educational policy, teaching standards and the management of financial and human resources. The board holds the principal to account. Representatives of the board may also sit on the interim executive committee.
- There have been several changes to teaching staff and leadership roles since the school became an academy and since the previous inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in 17 classes. The principal joined the inspector in all observations undertaken.
- The inspector heard pupils read and observed the teaching of early reading.
- The inspector looked at pupils' writing, mathematics and topic work.
- The inspector spoke to pupils on the playground and during lessons, to gather their views.
- Meetings were held with: the principal, the two deputy principals, the primary regional academy director, the chair of the interim executive committee and middle leaders.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the views expressed in the 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. There were no additional comments received online.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documents including the school development plan and the school's own evaluation of its work.
- The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- Evidence from Ofsted's previous monitoring visits was also taken into account.

Inspection team

Abigail Birch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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