

Inspection of Oscott Academy

St Martins's Church Centre, 140 Witton Lodge Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 5AP

Inspection dates: 30 April to 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Oscott Academy is a safe haven for pupils who have previously had very difficult school experiences. The school's success lies not in the building but in the people who work there and their unwavering commitment to helping pupils succeed. Every member of staff involved with the school is fully dedicated to helping these pupils to be successful and reach their potential. Slowly these pupils start to believe in themselves too. Pupils describe the school as life-changing.

Pupils thrive at this school because their individual needs are exceptionally well met. Many have had long periods away from school. Most have faced periods of suspension or exclusion from previous schools. As a result of this, many arrive with negative views of education. Leaders recognise this but maintain very high expectations of all pupils. They ensure that pupils study a curriculum that has been matched to their needs, interests and aspirations and prepares them very well for their next steps.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. Many commented on the positive difference in their children since being enrolled here. One parent's comment was typical of others when they told us: 'Without this school, I really do not think my child would be the person they are today, the support they have received from this school is above and beyond.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

As pupils who join the school have experienced disruption to their education, most have fallen behind academically. For some, they may have missed years of school. Therefore, leaders rightly prioritise reading, writing and mathematics. There is a strong focus on filling gaps in pupils' reading and mathematics knowledge, and this is very effective in making sure that pupils catch up quickly. As a result, pupils learn well with the vast majority going on to achieve GCSEs in core subjects. Alongside this, staff ensure that pupils spend time learning a broad range of other subjects.

Staff are dedicated and show real commitment to securing pupils' success. They go the extra mile to get to know each pupil thoroughly and to establish positive relationships. Adults work tirelessly to provide a nurturing environment where pupils thrive. Over time, this helps to rebuild pupils' confidence in school and their view of education.

Reading is appropriately prioritised across the curriculum. Leaders and staff carefully utilise everyday opportunities to develop these reading skills. Where additional support is required, this is done discreetly and effectively.

When pupils start at Oscott Academy, full information about their needs is not always known by the school. Therefore, staff work closely with pupils to accurately assess pupils' starting points and to keep track of their progress over time. Independent careers advice and wide range of opportunities help pupils to prepare

very well for their next steps. These opportunities include advice on filling in applications, attending open days and mock interviews.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils work harmoniously together each day in a relatively small space. This successful approach is down to two key factors. The first is the relentless hard work of the staff and inspirational headteacher who are all fully invested in the success of the pupils. The second key element is the high expectations of everyone which are firmly in place and understood by all. These are non-negotiable. Pupils respect these expectations and consistently try to meet them.

Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for each other and their teachers, both in lessons and at social times. They engage meaningfully with their learning, producing work of a high quality. Most want to come to school, and most attend school regularly.

The personal development of pupils is a high priority. Staff have carefully organised the content of the personal, social and health education curriculum so that pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need for the future. Staff act swiftly to ensure that they respond appropriately to topics that come up in pupils' everyday lives.

The proprietor checks that the independent school standards are consistently met. They fulfil their statutory duties well. For example, they ensure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the safeguarding policy, which has regard to the latest government guidance, is published on the school's website. At the time of the inspection, there was not a functioning shower for pupils. However, the proprietor has definite plans in place to rectify this by the end of the summer term 2024.

The headteacher's moral purpose and vision for the school's success are incredibly clear. Staff feel valued and say that their well-being is always a high priority. They appreciate the many opportunities they have for professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	142115
DfE registration number	330/6018
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10322594
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Proprietor	Stewart Dance
Headteacher	Stewart Dance
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,000 to £30,000
Telephone number	01214482565
Website	www.oscottacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@oscottacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 to 30 September 2021

Information about this school

- Oscott Academy is an independent school based in Erdington for pupils aged between 14 and 16 who are at risk of being, or have already been, excluded from mainstream provision. The school caters for some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in the borough.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Pupils are referred to the school by the local authority, local schools and placement services. Pupils can join Oscott Academy at any point during the school year.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher who is also the proprietor, the deputy headteacher, the curriculum lead and the learning mentor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education and science. For these deep dives, inspectors carried out a range of activities, including discussions about the curriculum and looking at curriculum documentation, visiting lessons, speaking to teachers and pupils and looking at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector toured the premises to check for compliance with the independent school standards. A number of key documents were also reviewed, including policies relating to admissions, behaviour, curriculum, complaints, health and safety and safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff and parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Emma Gater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Hoddinott

Ofsted Inspector

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