

Inspection of Oscott Academy

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

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto is 'potential', and pupils flourish at this school. They make huge strides in personal development and do well academically. The headteacher and most staff have high expectations for their pupils' success.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are polite, well-mannered and welcome visitors. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Parents and carers are delighted with their children's progress, and with their growing maturity. Pupils are determined to achieve the qualifications needed for the next steps in their education.

There is a warm family atmosphere in the school. This helps pupils to be ready to learn. Pupils know that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem or a concern. In the classroom, staff give help and support with the work when it is needed. At times, some staff do not have high enough expectations of what all pupils can achieve.

Right from the start, pupils learn to get on well together. Reflection time at the end of each day helps them to remember everything they have done well. They go home with highly positive feelings about themselves. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with bullying if it happens.

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

Most pupils who attend this school have missed a lot of education in the past. Pupils have many gaps in their knowledge and skills. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make initial checks to find out what pupils know and can do. Teachers then map out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn over time. Pupils have opportunities to revisit what they have learned in the past so that they remember it well. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils gain qualifications in mathematics, English and science. Leaders know that this improves pupils' life chances and opens up opportunities for continuing education. As a result, the vast majority move on to further education.

Leaders make reading a high priority. Pupils enjoy the weekly 'book club' experience, which has helped improve their reading skills. Everyone in school reads a shared book, and staff and pupils take turns to read. Pupils enjoy this special, quiet time.

Leaders have planned a broad and rich curriculum for pupils. However, some aspects of the curriculum are not sufficiently well planned and sequenced. For example, what pupils learn in relationships and sex education does not always fit in at the right time to complement what they learn about the human body in their health education. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do in lessons are not high enough in some subjects. Leaders know that the curriculum needs further development, and they have already started this work.

Leaders and staff have worked hard to create a family atmosphere throughout the school. This is reflected in the physical environment as well as in the positive relationships between all staff and pupils. As a result, pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. This is reflected in the exceptionally high attendance figures. Pupils' attendance has, in most cases, risen from very low levels in previous settings to exceptionally high levels in this setting.

Pupils say that they get along extremely well with each other and with staff. All staff are exceptionally well trained to support pupils with their emotional and mental well-being. Staff are able to pre-empt and deflect possible disturbances if pupils are feeling anxious.

Leaders provide very carefully considered pastoral support for pupils. Staff skilfully help pupils to develop high aspirations and take pride in their achievements. Leaders work tirelessly to provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to change their own life and the lives of others. For example, at the Christmas 'Give Away' event pupils gave away toys, food and toiletries. Pupils expressed deep feelings of pride, commenting, 'It made me feel like a decent person.'

Pupils have excellent opportunities to see how democracy works. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, school council representatives give speeches to persuade people to vote for them. Lessons frequently include elements of careers education, which prepares pupils well for the next steps in their education. Time in this school moulds character and resilience so that pupils have the confidence to face the world of work and training.

Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, makes sure that all staff have continual professional development. Teachers have good subject knowledge for the subjects that they teach. Staff say they enjoy working in the school and that leaders are considerate of their welfare. Parents praise staff for their commitment to their children's personal and academic progress.

Leaders are keen to develop the school further. They seek advice and support from external experts, including the school improvement partner (SIP). The SIP provides challenge to the school in a variety of ways. This includes formal termly meetings and frequent informal communication, when required. This support helps the school to keep on improving.

The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policy is displayed on the school's website and takes account of the most recent government guidance. Staff report even the smallest worry or safeguarding concern. Staff know what they need to do if they are

concerned about a pupil's welfare. Pupils feel safe in the school. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both in the school and when online. Leaders check staff's suitability to work with children before they start to work at the school. Leaders work well with other agencies to protect and support the pupils in their care.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects are carefully sequenced so that pupils build on what they already know and can do.
- In a few subjects, teachers do not plan work that is as well matched to pupils' needs as it should be. As a result, pupils are sometimes not challenged effectively to produce their best work. Leaders should continue to work with staff to ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of what every pupil can achieve.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	142115
DfE registration number	330/6018
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10205097
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Stewart Dance
Headteacher	Stewart Dance
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	0121 448 2565
Website	www.oscottacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@oscottacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 to 22 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school opened in May 2015. This is the school's second standard inspection.
- 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.
- All pupils at Oscott Academy are pupils with SEND.
- 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. The school has an agreement with Birmingham local authority to provide full-time education for identified pupils. Contracts are agreed with individual schools and services within the local authority.

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.

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher, and with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in English, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and groups of pupils to talk about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work in each subject.
- The lead inspector toured the premises with the headteacher to check their suitability.
- Inspectors examined a large number of policies, schemes of work and curriculum plans, as well as documentation related to health and safety, and first aid. The lead inspector reviewed the school's self-evaluation document and the school development plan.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the deputy headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, to discuss safeguarding procedures. The lead

inspector also scrutinised safeguarding documentation, including the school's single central record. She also spoke to all staff about their knowledge of how to safeguard pupils.

- The lead inspector held a discussion with the deputy headteacher about planning and provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector spoke to the school improvement partner and a SEND commissioning consultant for Birmingham local authority on the telephone.
- The lead inspector spoke to four parents on the telephone and took account of 31 responses to the school's own record of parents' views. She took account of Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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