

Oasis Academy Arena

Address: Albert Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 4QL

Unique reference number (URN): 140209

Inspection report: 14 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Inclusion is central to the school's work, underpinning leaders' actions in school improvement. It is seen as everybody's responsibility. With support from the trust and the local authority, leaders have developed systems to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified, especially for those new to the country and pupils known to social care. This includes a specialist induction programme run in partnership with the local authority on the school's site. This is specifically designed to support unaccompanied minors and other pupils who join the school at the early stages of learning English.

The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, The Matrix, provides high-quality support for pupils with autism. Leaders design personalised approaches, including for example, individual timetables, that promote pupils' academic progress and wellbeing. The school seeks timely advice from external agencies to ensure that pupils consistently get the support that they need.

Leaders have a very good understanding of the support that disadvantaged pupils require. They use this to ensure their actions have a positive impact on these pupils' achievement and that pupils are supported to make a full contribution to school life. Pupil premium funding and targeted support for pupils known to social care are both closely monitored to ensure that they remove barriers.

Alternative provision is used appropriately, proportionately and in the best interests of pupils. Leaders commission these provisions carefully as a short-term measure to rebuild pupils' confidence and engagement with education.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders and the trust have ensured that there is a team in place to support families and help pupils attend well. Attendance is now more closely in line with national averages and leaders are committed to improving it further. As a result of leaders' actions, the persistent absence of pupils has reduced significantly. This includes for pupils who are disadvantaged or known to social care. The school liaises with other agencies so that pupils and their families receive the guidance and care they need to support regular attendance. Leaders carefully review their strategies to ensure that they are effective.

Leaders know and understand their pupils and the context of the community the school serves. The school fosters a culture of mutual respect. Many pupils speak proudly about the positive changes in the school. Behaviour in lessons is typically calm and focused. Many pupils value quieter classrooms where they can concentrate. Occasionally, social times are less settled for some pupils, where occasional negative behaviour affects pupils' sense of

security. Nevertheless, pupils are well supervised and serious incidents are rare. Staff ensure that any incidents of discrimination or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is appropriately sequenced. Knowledge builds progressively towards ambitious and clearly defined end points. Most teaching is typically effective. Leaders have an accurate view of the curriculum and teaching and have identified suitable priorities to improve it further. For example, they are aware that, on occasions, pupils do not experience the same high-quality teaching in lessons across the school. Leaders work with teachers to make appropriate tweaks and changes to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of each group of pupils. Together, leaders and staff ensure that there is extra support for those pupils who need it to secure their early reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills.

In most subjects, teachers check pupils' knowledge to identify gaps in learning. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to explain concepts clearly. They typically adapt activities effectively to meet pupils' needs, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Increasingly pupils show genuine enthusiasm for learning and remember more over time. However, in a few subjects, these strengths in teaching are not well embedded. Some pupils are more reluctant and have some gaps in their learning. While strategies are in place to support these pupils, there are occasions when strategies are not used as consistently as they could be. For example, previous inconsistencies in teaching and the curriculum mean that some key stage 4 pupils have developed larger gaps in their learning over time. In some instances, teaching does not check the extent of these gaps or ensure they are fully closed before moving on to new learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including at trust level, have a deep understanding of the community the school serves and the barriers that many of its pupils face. Leaders and the trust ensure that the best interests of pupils remain at the centre of their decisions. The inclusive culture reflects and builds on the principle that all pupils should feel part of the school and have a positive experience.

Leaders have identified clear priorities for improvement and are taking effective and swift action to secure the necessary changes, including effective work to raise pupils' achievement. They work closely with other schools in the trust. For example, leaders and staff share expertise through professional learning. Leaders also work effectively with external organisations and agencies. For example, they liaise closely with the virtual school and the local authority when adapting pupils' educational offer. This ensures that pupils receive provision that meets their needs.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively in order to improve pupils' experiences at school. For example, these pupils benefit from the school's work to encourage them to attend more regularly and enjoy school. Extra support for pupils' academic needs is beginning to have a positive impact, such as with reading and communication.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to a coherent and evidence-informed programme of professional learning that supports the development of expertise over time, including for early career teachers. Staff value training that builds expertise in curriculum, assessment and inclusive practice. Leaders thoughtfully manage workload and promote staff wellbeing so that improvement expectations remain ambitious and sustainable. Staff are positive about the changes in the school and are proud to work here.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have constructed a well-planned, age-appropriate personal development programme. They recognise its importance in preparing pupils for adult life, particularly in their local area. The school's context is significant. Most pupils are disadvantaged, and many have additional vulnerabilities or are known to social care. Leaders shape what is taught in response to pupil voice, events in school and information from their oversight and monitoring. For example centrally planned safeguarding lessons respond to the local context such as tackling serious youth violence. As a result, pupils are well informed about what they can do to avoid risk and keep safe.

Pupils develop an understanding of equality and diversity. They explore different cultures, faiths and religions, and apply fundamental British values meaningfully in school life. All pupils learn about healthy relationships and, at an age-appropriate level, consent.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of clubs that reflect their interests. There are an increasing range of trips available. Leaders are committed to ensuring inclusion within enrichment activities. They monitor participation across pupil groups and are beginning to use this information more strategically to widen access opportunities for all pupils.

Pastoral leaders and other staff check on pupils' wellbeing regularly. Pupils tell them of any worries. Staff then put in place support for pupils that helps them engage with school more positively. This includes mentoring provided by the Oasis hub as well as after-school and holiday activities. This supports pupils, including those who are the most vulnerable, to develop a strong sense of belonging in school.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive the careers advice and guidance they need to make informed choices about their next steps. Pupils appreciate learning about what they can do after leaving school. Careers advice and workplace learning ensure that pupils have the information they need to make the right decisions for their next stage in education. The school provides additional support for vulnerable pupils. This includes, for example, extra visits to providers in further education and trips to broaden their experiences.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils now learn more securely than previously because leaders have improved the quality of teaching and curriculum design. Pupils' attainment in national tests has improved. However, it has remained below national averages. The high number of pupils who join the

school after the start of Year 7 and often with limited school experience contributes significantly to these outcomes.

For pupils who have not yet secured strong knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, leaders recognise the need to prioritise support for these pupils' learning. Targeted interventions are in place and are informed by pupils' identified needs. The progress pupils make, from when they start at school to when they finish, has improved year on year. This is not, at present, reflected in published outcomes in national examinations

Despite pupils' low achievement over time, leaders support pupils well with their progression beyond school, and most pupils successfully move on to the next stage of their education, employment and training. However, further improvement is required to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently well.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a welcoming and inclusive school. Leaders take the responsibility of serving their community seriously. Pupils build positive relationships with staff and each other, creating a warm and supportive community. Staff take time to understand pupils' individual circumstances. Pupils know that if they have any worries, they can share them. Staff take prompt, effective action to address issues, including any bullying, so pupils feel and are kept safe.

Many pupils face significant barriers to learning. A large proportion are disadvantaged and many pupils join at different points in the year. There are also a high number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, each at a different stage of learning English. The school takes careful account of each pupil's individual circumstances. For example, some pupils benefit from extra support with settling in to school life through onsite provision delivered in partnership with the local authority.

Additionally, many pupils benefit from extra support to improve their reading, writing and communication. Strong pastoral approaches, including the work of the Oasis hub, which is attached to the school, help pupils to manage their wellbeing and feel ready to learn. The support for families that the school provides means that many parents and carers are positive about the school.

Over time, pupils have not achieved as well as they could have. Leaders have responded to this and have reset expectations. Improvements to the curriculum and teaching are starting to have a positive impact on the achievement of pupils currently in the school. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn well. A small number of pupils still experience some variation in how well the curriculum and teaching promote their learning.

There is a comprehensive programme for personal development that all pupils benefit from. Pupils also benefit from well-planned careers guidance, which gives them a clear understanding of the world of work. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are starting to

improve. They are now attending more regularly than previously, although leaders recognise there is still further work to do.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that work to strengthen consistency in the quality of teaching is embedded, both to secure and deepen pupils' knowledge and ensure that pupils make as much progress through the curriculum as they can.
 - Leaders should continue to support teachers to use formative assessment successfully to ensure that any gaps that pupils have in their understanding are addressed swiftly.
 - Leaders should ensure that actions to strengthen achievement across all subjects are fully embedded and continue to translate into improved outcomes for all pupils.
 - Leaders should continue to develop their strategies to ensure that recent improvements in pupils' levels of attendance are sustained.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Oasis Community Learning, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), John Barneby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Caroline Taylor.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, deputy principals and other senior leaders in the school. Inspectors also spoke with the CEO and regional directors of the trust and a member of the board of trustees.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses 2 registered and one unregistered alternative provisions.

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with autism. This provision has capacity for 15 pupils.

Principal : Jeanette Bell

Lead inspector:

Sam Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ray Lau, Ofsted Inspector

Alan Blount, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

369

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

900

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

52.57%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.42%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.68%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	28.8%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.0%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.6	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	35.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.6	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar

results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.50	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.54	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	15.4%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	23.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	19.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	28.9	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.9	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	29.9	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.78	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.74	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	15.4%	53.1%	-37.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	23.8%	53.1%	-29.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	19.2%	52.4%	-33.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	28.9	50.4	-21.5
2023/24 (final)	30.9	50.0	-19.1

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	29.9	50.3	-20.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.78	0.16	-0.94
2022/23 (final)	-0.74	0.17	-0.91

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	84%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	88%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	10.2%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	13.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.4%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	33.6%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	39.2%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	34.9%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright