

Ormiston Park Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135960
Inspection number	381983
Inspection dates	16-17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Samantha Morgan-Price HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	547
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Barnes
Headteacher	Mrs Theresa Walker
School address	Nathan Drive Aveley Essex RM15 4RU
Telephone number	01708 865180
Fax number	01708 864498
Email address	twalker@ormistonpark.org.uk

Age group	11-19
Inspection date(s)	16-17 November 2011
Inspection number	381983

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The number of lessons observed was 27 and the number of teachers seen was 23. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a parent governor, members of staff, and the Educational Adviser and the Chief Executive of the Ormiston Academy Trust. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of lesson observations, attainment and achievement data, minutes of governing body meetings, and the whole academy and departmental self-evaluations. Inspectors also scrutinised 59 questionnaires completed and returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement, especially in mathematics and English, of the higher attaining students to determine whether teaching and assessment are sufficiently challenging and meeting their needs.
- The care, guidance and support for those students more potentially vulnerable to underachieving, including those in care, and the effectiveness of strategies to reduce persistent non-attendance.
- The effectiveness of the quality of middle leadership in the weaker performing subjects and the steps that have been taken to improve students' performance in these subjects.

Information about the school

The academy is a smaller-than-average school which opened in 2009. The academy's sponsor is the Ormiston Academy Trust. Over 80% of students are White British, while the remainder of students are from various other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is lower than that seen nationally although this has risen significantly since September 2011. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. Over half of students are girls. Similarly, over half of students have a special educational need and/or disability and this proportion is significantly higher than that seen nationally. Many of these students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A higher than average numbers of students have a statement of special educational needs. The academy houses a specially resourced provision for special educational needs. This discrete facility, called the ASCEND Unit, supports seven students with a statement of special educational needs and who have extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The academy operates as two colleges called Aspen and Sycamore. The academy's specialism is English and creative and cultural skills. It is also a training school for Thinking Skills having been granted Thinking Skills status. The academy's sixth form is growing although only a few students actually study at the academy. The vast majority of students are taught entirely by a partner college independent of the Trust as part of a partnership arrangement. The academy intends to have independent provision for its sixth form students beginning in September 2012. The sixth form

was not inspected. The academy has approval for a new purpose-built building to be completed in September 2013.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The academy has embarked upon an effective journey and is providing a good and rapidly improving education for its students. The work of the passionate and visionary Principal has enabled students to significantly improve many of their academic outcomes. Together with staff, she has successfully established a culture and ethos where students are at the heart of everything the academy does. Every child does matter. Students express strong appreciation of what the academy provides, such as the strong mentoring programme. Along with her dedicated leadership team, in the two years of the academy's life, the Principal has ensured that students make good and strongly improving progress in their learning. Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, as well as the contribution they make to school life, is exemplary. Students have excellent opportunities to reflect on their lives and those of others and use these opportunities to gain a well-developed understanding of different cultures and faiths. They know their views are taken seriously and their contribution includes the selection of new staff to the academy. The exemplary care, guidance and support provided enables those students with additional needs, or those who may be vulnerable, to receive timely intervention or extra help so that all achieve well, including those in the ASCEND Unit. The significant proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is extremely well supported and those students at risk of exclusion are nurtured well. This, along with the highly effective measures in place to tackle discrimination, enables the academy to demonstrate an outstanding promotion of equal opportunities. Incidents of bullying of any kind are rare. The excellent partnerships, especially the 14-19 consortium, contribute to improving students' outcomes extremely effectively. The highly effective safeguarding board regularly discusses the needs of all students who are of concern and swift actions are implemented to safeguard their well-being. The academy's staff work effectively to ensure that students behave well at all times and there are good measures in place to address any isolated instances of poor behaviour. Although significant measures have been implemented to improve attendance, they have not as yet brought about significant improvement. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has fallen but attendance overall is low.

Students make good progress in their learning and some groups make outstanding progress from their relatively low starting points. Students apply themselves well in lessons. Attainment is below the national average. Significantly less than average proportions of students achieve five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. Although attainment in both English literature and

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

language fell in 2011 and a few other subjects performed less well, students are on track to attain much better results this academic year. Consequently, the gap with national expectations is closing. Students make outstanding progress in achieving their vocational qualifications. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the highly effective care, guidance and support. The academy recognises that there are a few higher-attaining pupils who are not making strong enough progress; there are effective actions and monitoring in place to address this.

Good teaching is enabling students to make good progress. In the good lessons, teachers use questions well to gain an understanding of how well students are learning. They draw out good explanations and encourage students to refine their answers. In some of the weaker lessons, teachers' use of assessment to support students in their learning lacks rigour. In a few lessons, questions are not probing enough and checks on students' learning are not robust enough which slows their progress. Not even in all the good lessons seen was marking undertaken effectively to help students know what to do to make their work better. Marking generally follows the academy's policy but lacks detail on how to improve. Effective work, though at early stages of implementation, is being undertaken in Key Stage 3 to promote reading. However, there are too few opportunities to develop literacy, especially writing, across the curriculum.

Leaders and managers have a strong understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for development. Future plans and actions to bring about further improvement, especially in relation to students' attainment and attendance, are well informed by the academy's robust monitoring and analysis of its work. Key recent improvements, such as the reduction of persistent absence, the improvements in most of the weaker subjects and the many good student outcomes demonstrate the academy's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - improving teachers' use of ongoing assessment of students' learning in lessons to accelerate students' progress
 - developing the use of literacy across the curriculum so that teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to practise their skills, especially in writing
 - senior leaders reviewing the effectiveness of the academy's marking policy to ensure that teachers mark work so that students know how to improve their performance.

- Improve students' attendance by further reducing the proportion of those who are persistently absent.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Students' attainment on entry is significantly lower than national averages. Attainment in a few GCSE subjects fell in 2011; this was partly due to the lower prior attainment of the Year 11 cohort. Attainment in some GCSE subjects improved, notably mathematics. In lessons seen, students were motivated to succeed in their learning. Higher-attaining students are not always stretched sufficiently to undertake challenging tasks. Children in care, and those in the ASCEND Unit, make progress that is in line with their peers. There are good measures in place to support students at the early stages of learning English which is enabling them to learn well. Students with behaviour, emotional and social difficulty are helped to improve their behaviour and learn well. There were instances when students used self and peer-assessment well to make progress in their learning. In an arts class, students demonstrated a highly developed use of peer and self-assessment to improve their project designs.

Students say that they feel safe and extremely well supported by staff; this was endorsed by all groups within the school, including the potentially most vulnerable. They know who to turn to if they experience a problem or need support. Students have a clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and the services the academy provides to help them achieve this are well known to them. They interact extremely well with each other and with other members of the academy's community. Their involvement at borough level, in various performing arts and community workshops, is highly regarded by the local community. Students are electing to take the option at Key Stage 4 to improve their financial skills and the 'speak out' training workshops for Year 10 are contributing to improving oracy skills. Although students' punctuality to lessons is improving, the improvement in their overall attendance has been slower. However, they are satisfactorily prepared for future life because the school makes good preparation to improve their work readiness skills and develop their business skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers take account of students' special educational needs and/or disabilities extremely well and their planning consistently identifies students with other pastoral issues. Teaching and the curriculum for students in the ASCEND Unit is enabling students to make good gains in their learning. Teachers manage poor behaviour well; the few isolated instances of low level disruption are dealt with extremely swiftly so that learning is not disrupted. In the majority of stronger lessons, teachers develop students' skills of exploration so they are able to think for themselves. In the majority of lessons, learning objectives are reinforced well and there is good referencing to relevant attainment levels. In some lessons, teachers refer to and plan for how students can achieve higher grades; this motivates and challenges students well. However, marking is inconsistent across the academy and does not provide enough guidance to students on how to improve.

The curriculum allows students to gain a range of qualifications including those in the ASCEND Unit. A large proportion of the Key Stage 4 curriculum is made up of relevant vocational courses. Although these meet the needs and interest of students, students say they would like more GCSE courses to be available to enable them to have more options in the sixth form. The organisation of students into mixed year groups in all subjects allows the academy to offer more choice at Key Stage 4 as some year groups are small. The three-year Key Stage 4 curriculum allows early entry for students in some subjects; this has a valuable motivating effect and helps students to focus on gaining qualifications. Higher-attaining students access triple science and modern foreign languages. Students have opportunities to develop creatively and culturally through the specialism opportunities they are offered in world dance and courses in art from different cultures.

The 'wraparound' care, guidance and support, including the support provided by the ASCEND Unit, are excellent. There is significant provision to support students, including the Success Centre for disaffected Key Stage 3 and 4 students to allow re-integration into mainstream provision. The school has designated a member of the senior leadership team to manage the welfare of potentially vulnerable students. The new information centre provides students with guidance on a range of concerns and is enabling them to access good advice on health-related issues. The proportion of persistent absences has fallen because of very strong strategies including detailed analysis of trends in attendance, early intervention systems and a personalised support system to remove barriers to good attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The academy is extremely robust in its measures to safeguard the well-being of students and to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. The academy has removed barriers to learning for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those in the ASCEND Unit. Partnerships to support the most vulnerable students, including the work at the Success Centre, are enabling students to effectively resume their learning. Members of the governing body and the academy's sponsors are knowledgeable of the priorities of the academy and scrutinise its performance well. They are also very supportive. The academy is making good use of advice and support from external sources, such as the use of the Trust's Education Advisor as critical friend in challenging students' performance. Senior leaders are embedding ambition and driving improvement very effectively. Although middle leaders share the vision of the academy, a few recently appointed heads of department have not as yet received enough support to achieve their objectives. Consequently, their action planning is not as sharp. The academy has undertaken a clear analysis of its context. It has reflected on the impact of its strategies to improve community cohesion and there are good plans in place to promote this further. The exciting range of initiatives includes students having the opportunity to communicate with students in deprived areas of India which is developing their understanding of different communities and non-British students' experience of education.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

2

Views of parents and carers

There was a low return of questionnaires from parents and carers. Almost all parents and carers were in agreement with the majority of the questions asked, especially that the school keeps their children safe; their children are making enough progress at the academy; the academy meets their children's particular needs and they are happy with their children's experience at the academy. Parent and carers were not as overwhelmingly positive with respect to the academy's effectiveness in dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ormiston Park Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 547 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	36	35	59	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	41	34	58	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	42	32	54	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	44	32	54	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	37	35	59	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	24	41	32	54	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	19	44	75	3	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	37	33	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	23	39	36	61	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	37	30	51	5	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	22	43	73	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	34	36	61	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	26	44	32	54	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Ormiston Park Academy, Aveley, RM15 4RU

We thank you for welcoming us and telling us about your work and views of life in school. We judged the academy to be good.

- You enjoy going to the academy and you behave well.
- You make an excellent contribution to the academy through the organisation of your various activities and supporting senior teachers in interviewing for new staff.
- The Principal and other managers are working well and have made a lot of improvements to support you in your learning. The care, guidance and support and safeguarding they provide are excellent. The excellent partnerships that the academy has made enables it to provide you with this high level of care and support.

The inspection team did recognise that there were some points that the academy needs to address. Therefore, we have asked the academy to make a number of improvements.

- Raise your attainment especially in English and mathematics by
 - improving how your teachers use the information about your performance in your lessons to help you improve your progress
 - senior managers developing a plan to improve your writing skills across all your subjects not just in English
 - senior managers reviewing the guidance on how your work is marked to ensure that your teachers can tell you how to improve your performance.
- Improve your attendance by further reducing the proportion of those of you who are persistently absent.

You can all help by continuing to work hard in lessons, checking with your teachers about what you need to do to improve your work and always attending school unless you are unwell.

Yours sincerely
Samantha Morgan-Price

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**