

Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

Barnfield Avenue, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6EP

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students are making rapid progress and an increasing number delight in the challenge and excitement of learning. Students' learning and success are now placed at the centre of academy life.
- Standards in English and mathematics, as well as in a broad range of subjects, continue to improve. Students in Years 7 and 8 improve rapidly, especially in their reading skills. Older students are increasingly successful in examinations. The sixth form is good.
- Teaching standards have been transformed. Teachers show high levels of confidence in their skills and promote an ambitious agenda for students. The use of technology has played a key role in promoting enthusiasm, enquiry and challenge in learning.
- The behaviour of students is good. Students make an excellent contribution to a purposeful and orderly academy community. Successful and confident sixth formers provide superb role models for younger students. The academy buzzes with a desire on the part of all to improve and do well.
- The Principal provides outstanding leadership, which is best illustrated by his uncompromising drive for improvement and high aspirations for all. Managers, staff and students alike have bought into his vision. Governors have a good understanding of the academy's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Results at GCSE five A*-C, including English and mathematics, are not yet consistently above national averages.
- A small minority of teachers do not plan lessons that cater for the abilities of all students and for the development of their independent learning skills.
- Marking is inconsistent in a few classes and in these, teachers do not give students clear advice on how to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons of which three were joint observations with the academy’s senior leaders. They also attended assemblies, tutorials and watched an academy drama production.
- Eight groups of students met with inspectors. Discussions were held with academy staff, including senior leaders, heads of departments, teachers, representatives of the sponsor and governing body.
- Inspectors looked at responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They analysed 20 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors read a range of documents including the academy’s self-evaluation, improvement and development plans, monitoring reports, behaviour logs and records in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Patrick Geraghty, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jim Bennetts	Additional Inspector
Sophie Gillies	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
John Leigh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy opened in September 2010 and serves the community of Runcorn new town. The academy's sponsors are the Ormiston Trust and the University of Chester. For several years the predecessor school had recorded very low standards at GCSE.
- This is an average sized secondary school. The numbers of students on roll is increasing because of the growing numbers entering at Year 7, as well as those staying on and joining the popular sixth form.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is well above average.
- A much lower than average proportion of students is of a minority ethnic heritage.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy exceeds the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further student results for five GCSE A* to C passes, including English and mathematics, so that they are consistently high by ensuring the drive for improvement in English and mathematics is maintained.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons match the best within the academy by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide lessons that meet the needs of students of different abilities
 - provide the opportunity for students to develop their independent enquiry skills and ways to better organise and refine their own learning
 - enable opportunities for students to give feedback on each other's work so that they can deepen their understanding
 - make sure marking and feedback is regular in all classes and supports students in their next steps in learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with well below average standards in most subjects. Over the course of the last two years the quality of students' work has improved significantly. Current students' performance continues to rise rapidly.
- Improvement is very marked in Years 7 and 8 where progress is now consistently good. Students bring increased enthusiasm and commitment to their studies. Excellent use of technology has contributed to the development of a strong learning and improvement culture.
- Students now perform consistently better in a broad range of subjects including English and mathematics. In 2012, half of Year 11 students achieved five GCSE A* to C passes including English and mathematics, which represents an improvement of 27 percentage points over three years. Robust school data shows that current students are in line to achieve at least at the national average next year and beyond in later years. One hundred percent of students achieved five GCSE A* to C passes in the last academic year.
- The use of early entry for GCSE mathematics and English is considered carefully by the academy. Students who take early entry for mathematics but do not attain their ambitious target grades, continue to study and at a later date resit the paper. Those who achieve top grades at mathematics at early entry take additional mathematics qualifications in preparation for sixth form study.
- Students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve better than students nationally in this group. The academy is sharp in precisely targeting this funding to drive improvement and raise aspirations. For those students eligible, the gap between their achievement and that of their peers is closing quickly.
- The progress made by students who are disabled or with special educational needs is good. Highly effective support both in the classroom and in special sessions is paying dividends as can be seen through the good progress students make and their improving reading skills.
- The rapid and sustained rise in the academy's standards is due to the relentless drive to improve teaching and learning. There is highly effective tracking of students' progress and quick and effective intervention if any students are falling behind their targets. The strong aspirational culture established by academy leaders is best reflected in the ambitions stated by current Year 7 and 8 students summarised by one student as 'To do the best you can and go to university'.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form. In 2012 the first group of academy sixth formers to complete their studies achieved 100% grades A* to E in their GCE A-level results across all subjects. Twenty four students progressed to higher education and in doing so became the first members of their family to go to university.
- There is a very strong focus on developing reading and most students are now keen readers and this has impacted on improved writing skills. Many students start the academy with reading ages well below average, but as a result of well-focused intervention now make rapid progress. Students make excellent use of electronic tablet technology to store and record their reading activities and to develop their writing and research skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching is good and a significant amount of teaching is now outstanding. The quality of teaching over the last three years has improved rapidly. The improvement was aptly conveyed by one Year 10 student who noted 'We are much more confident because we have more confident teachers'.
- In the most successful lessons, teachers acted as facilitators and enabled a great deal of independent learning from students. Students were able to give extended responses to questions and relished the opportunities to challenge their peers and teachers. Learning was at

least good and often outstanding because teachers helped students to feel very positive about their achievements and encouraged them to celebrate and build-up their successes. Excellent use of technology, including electronic tablet technology, develops students' research skills.

- In a small minority of lessons teachers dominated and students were too passive. Learning lacked pace and sufficient challenge. Students' expectations were low and this slowed the pace of learning.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of marking. In the few lessons where marking was less strong students were not given pointers to the next steps to improvement and there was no evidence of teachers' follow-up to assess improvement. In the best marking, students' work showed how they had used marking tips to improve and develop their knowledge.
- Students regularly assess their own work and that of their classmates. This worked very well in one outstanding geography lesson, where students were given different topics on sustainable tourism and then devised a question and appropriate mark scheme. These questions were then circulated to another group to complete; answers were marked by another group by means of the marking scheme devised. Not one second was wasted in the exercise such was the intensity and commitment demonstrated by students to the task; the whole session buzzed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour and safety of students are good. The most frequent words used by students to describe the academy were 'family' and 'community'. In the words of one student, this is a place where 'We feel safe and where we learn'.
- Behaviour in class and around the academy is good and well managed. Students show pride in their appearance and conduct. They are respectful, polite and considerate to each other, staff and visitors.
- Over the last two years, attendance has improved to the national average because students have taken greater pride in their academy and as the quality of teaching and support has rapidly improved. A newly appointed attendance leader is driving attendance further upward and involving parents to a greater extent than before.
- Students do not see bullying as a significant issue. When it occurs they say it is quickly and effectively dealt with and issues are resolved. Students told inspectors that tutorial sessions on different types of bullying have helped them to be more sensitive to others and appreciative and positive of people's differences.
- Exclusion rates have been significantly reduced. Punctuality is good and lessons are rarely disrupted.
- The development of more self-confident learners has brought a new and positive atmosphere to academy life. Students are proud of developing skills in managing their own learning and take an active interest in the learning of others. For example, a Year 10 group produced an introductory and catch-up video on a new mathematics unit to update a group of their peers away on a Berlin history trip.
- The academy provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities to challenge students and raise their aspirations. The diversity of British society is explored by visits to different communities and different religious centres and by exploring the two nearby cities of Manchester and Liverpool. Trips abroad to Germany, Spain, France and China have extended students' horizons and nurtured an interest in the wider world.

The leadership and management are good

- This is a rapidly improving academy because senior leaders and governors have a very clear vision. It is simply based on having the best teaching and best outcomes for all students. The Principal relentlessly drives this vision. One student said, 'He's everywhere, knows how well everyone is doing and wants them to do better'.
- The Principal has developed the senior staff into good leaders of the academy. They in turn have

supported faculty and subject leaders and classroom teachers to embrace and move forward with a robust aspirational and improvement plan. It has resulted in a strong learning community that celebrates its increasing success and drives for further improvement.

- Target setting, monitoring, tracking and ways to help students improve their learning have greatly improved. Data is now effectively used by managers and teachers to provide information about students' performance and progress. Support is very well focused.
- The pupil premium funding has been used very well to enable greater opportunities for students to improve their reading, numeracy, speaking and writing skills and to develop higher aspirations. This strong focus on reading, numeracy and speaking skills has impacted on improved standards and more confident and articulate students. The academy places a strong focus on equality of opportunity, which is best demonstrated by rising standards and increased opportunities for all students.
- The academy has established very good transition arrangements with the primary schools. Academy teachers work with their colleagues in the primary schools with Years 5 and 6 pupils to strengthen their reading and numeracy skills. A transitional summer school further refines these skills and enables better-prepared pupils to enter the academy.
- Arrangements to manage and assess the performance of all staff are tough and effective. Professional development is used well to support and challenge teachers whose work has been judged as requiring improvement. In cases where practice does not improve competency procedures are implemented and staff leave the academy.
- The curriculum is well matched to the needs and developing aspirations of the students and strikes a good balance between the academic and vocational. The sixth form has promoted greater ambition for the future among all students. Well-developed courses in construction, engineering, equine care and hair and beauty have offered new opportunities for students who wish to take a vocational route.
- Staff have a pride in the academy and a strong confidence that it is moving forward in the right direction. One member of staff aptly summarised feelings, 'I feel valued on the journey we have travelled which has created a real learning community and a desire for success around the school'.
- Parents are increasingly supportive of the academy. Links to keep parents informed and to elicit their greater involvement in academy life have been developed and will be extended further through new facilities within the new academy extension.
- The sponsors provide strong support for the academy. They have been particularly responsive to academy initiatives in teaching and learning and in the promotion of new ideas for enabling better student performance and engagement. The academy has a good relationship with the local authority and they work well together in encouraging local involvement in the academy and use of its facilities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked hard over the last three years to develop their skills of governance. The use of data by governors to assess students' performance and progress has been sharpened and they are asking more searching questions of the academy management and setting more challenging targets. They have taken on board a stronger performance management culture. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how it has improved over the last three years. Governors are also well informed on salary progression and promotion issues within the school. They offer effective support to senior leaders in their drive for improving standards and higher student aspirations. Statutory duties are undertaken effectively and safeguarding requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136185
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	399794

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
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	846
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Lewis
Headteacher	John Rigby
Date of previous school inspection	Not Applicable
Telephone number	01928 711643
Fax number	01928 701860
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