

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy

Lower City Road, Oldbury, B69 2HE

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The most-able students are not reaching their full potential in English and mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement as the pace of some lessons is too slow. In these lessons, teachers are not matching the work enough to the abilities of students.
- A few teachers lack the skills to manage behaviour well. Students behave well in most, but not all, lessons.
- Having had four principals in a year, the school has lost the confidence of some parents.
- The sixth form requires improvement as the curriculum is limited and more students than expected either do not complete, or change, courses.
- Teachers do not consistently set high-quality homework.
- Students are not encouraged to read enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' progress has improved and is close to national expectations.
- Despite the changes in post of principal, senior leaders have driven improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Since her arrival in February 2013, the new permanent Principal has already made substantial improvements to students' behaviour, punctuality and the way the performance of teachers is managed.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of enrichment opportunities in lessons and in educational visits.
- Good links with partner schools are leading to improvement in the sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons taught by 32 different teachers. Shorter visits were made to 13 other lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the academy sponsor and students.
- Inspectors examined the school improvement plan, the school’s self-evaluation, records of students’ achievement and behaviour, the minutes of the governing body and other documentation.
- Inspectors examined 40 questionnaires completed by staff and 60 responses submitted by parents and carers to the on-line website Parent View. They also considered one email sent by a parent and the school’s own records of parents’ views collected in this academic year.

Inspection team

Robert Barbour, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Barry Cregeen	Additional Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The academy is a little smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The sixth form is very small.
- A higher than average proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school receives specific pupil premium funding based on this number.
- Just over half the students are of White British heritage. About 12% are of Pakistani heritage and 11% are of Indian heritage. The remaining students are from a range of other heritage groups. The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is higher than average.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is average. The proportion of students supported at school action is high.
- The academy exceeds the government's floor standards, which represent the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is in a consortium with two local partner schools with sixth-form provision: George Salter Academy and Bristnall Hall Technology College.
- The school uses some off-site alternative provision. The providers are the Bridge Centre, Batman's Hill, Whiteheath Pupil Referral Unit, Dudley College and the National College for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders.
- The academy sponsor is the Ormiston Academies Trust. The academy opened on 1 September 2009.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - match teaching to the abilities of their students
 - keep sufficient pace in their lessons to maintain the interest of students
 - stretch the most able to their full potential
 - use high-quality questioning to develop students' understanding and assess their progress
 - set high-quality homework
 - use the academy's behaviour management policy.
- Develop and monitor students' reading skills, reading across all subjects, and their reading for pleasure.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - engaging more effectively with parents
 - ensuring that the monitoring of the progress of the most-able students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs leads to improved progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is well below average. By the time they finish Year 11, students have made progress in line with the national average. However, relatively few students make better than expected progress and the most-able students do not reach their full potential in English and mathematics. In part, this is because they have been entered for some examinations early. It is also because the school is not ambitious enough in setting targets for progress.
- Students of Indian heritage gain better results than White British students, by about one GCSE grade in maths and two-thirds of a grade in English. Students of Pakistani heritage do slightly better than White British students. These gaps are narrowing as school leaders monitor students' progress and intervene when students fall behind. Students known to be eligible for free school meals achieve about one grade less in mathematics and three quarters of a grade less in English than other students, but this gap has narrowed and this narrowing continues.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs requires improvement. A newly appointed special educational needs coordinator is improving the way they are taught and the monitoring of their progress. These new systems have not yet had time to make an impact on results at GCSE.
- Students' reading skills are not developed enough. While some students enjoy reading, less able students in Years 7 and 8 said that they read less than in their primary school. They said that, apart from their English lessons, they largely read just textbooks in their lessons and that the amount of their reading is not regularly checked.
- In some lessons, students have outstanding opportunities to debate issues. This was particularly true in a Year 9 religious studies lesson. However, in other lessons students are given few opportunities to express themselves.
- The students attending off-site alternative education are those who have exhibited challenging behaviour. They do not make as much academic progress as students taught on the school site.
- When sixth form students follow a course through to completion, the progress that they make is in line with national progress rates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching requires improvement. In many lessons, work is either too easy or too hard for some students, especially when all students follow the same worksheet. In some lessons, the more-able students are not challenged to achieve to their full potential. In some lessons, students become restless as the teacher talks for too long. Teachers' questions are sometimes too closed to extract the extent of students' understanding or to develop it further.
- However, there is much that is good. In a Year 7 history lesson, students made good progress and engaged well in animated group discussions on aspects of the British Empire. Year 9 students made outstanding progress in religious education as they debated the ethics of cloning from the standpoints of differing religions. Students made most progress when the work was well pitched to their ability; where the teacher used questions skilfully to check understanding and develop it further; and where students' engagement was held by a good pace of learning. In

the best lessons, students' literacy skills and skills in speaking and listening were developed well.

- Homework is set inconsistently. Sixth form students said that it often consisted of finishing work from the lesson.
- Some teaching is imaginative, and enhances students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In history, students in Years 9 and 11 have used artefacts from Birmingham Museum as sources of evidence. In science, Year 9 students explored the consequences of the drug Thalidomide.
- There is focused support for reading in Year 7. It is not yet having sufficient impact, however, and the development of literacy plays too small a part in some lessons.
- Parents expressed concerns in 'Parent View' that the quality of teaching was not good. Inspectors found that it does indeed require improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Where teaching is good, students are engaged in their lessons and behaviour is also good. In a few lessons, teachers lack the skills and confidence to use the school's behaviour management policy. As a result, some low-level disruption occurs.
- Students' behaviour overall is improving. The number of exclusions has fallen, as has the rate at which students are placed in detention. Both have fallen by about a half since 2010/11. Students said that behaviour has improved a great deal.
- Students said that they feel safe. They find the system of student mentors provides a way to discuss emerging difficulties between students at an early stage. Most, but not all, students find the mixed-age tutor groups to be helpful. Students have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including cyber safety. Behaviour records show that bullying is rare, and students say that they know how to report any such issues and that they are sorted out quickly.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. Punctuality has improved a great deal since the arrival of the new Principal in February.
- The school is a cohesive community where different groups get on well together. The academy has acted as a focus for events with the local community where different traditions are celebrated.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The last permanent Principal left the school at the end of the summer term 2012. The academy had two interim principals before the appointment of the current permanent Principal at the end of February 2013. Four principals in seven months has left a legacy in that a group of parents has lost confidence in the academy. Of the 60 responses to Parent View, more than 60% indicated that they would not recommend the academy to another parent.
- During the interim period, the academy made progress, however, and this demonstrates the capacity for further improvement contained in the senior leadership team. Behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching and the progress that students make improved during this

time.

- The new Principal agrees with the results of Parent View that teaching and achievement are not good enough. She has already brought about improvements, including a new system to manage the performance of teachers. This makes clear that only good teaching is good enough. In the past, the management of the performance of teachers was not applied consistently. Targets lacked clarity, poor teaching was not picked up quickly enough, and there was insufficient support to enable teachers to improve. Even then, teachers did not automatically move up in pay if their performance was not good.
- The quality of teaching is now tracked well. Senior leaders' judgements of teaching are accurate. Good systems are in place for teachers to improve their practice such as small coaching groups in which teachers can work together to improve.
- Senior leaders have allocated the pupil premium funding well to support students who are at risk of disadvantage. This funds targeted interventions, extra catch-up sessions and smaller classes. The funding ensures that all students can access enrichment activities. Gaps in attainment between groups of students have reduced between 2011 and 2012, and more recent monitoring suggests that these gaps are continuing to close.
- Senior leaders monitor data to identify students who are falling behind and provide additional support. This works well to identify students at risk of not obtaining GCSE passes at grade C. The system is not identifying enough students of high ability who could achieve better than expected progress, nor has the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs been tracked rigorously enough.
- The academy's curriculum is changing to make it meet the needs, interests and aspirations of students better. The provision for extra-curricular activity including sport is good and is appreciated by students. There are also good educational visits. The sixth form curriculum requires improvement as it is narrow in extent, and students have stopped courses, or changed courses, more often than would be expected. The close links with partner schools in the sixth form consortium are leading to improvements in teaching and in the curriculum.
- The Ormiston Academies Trust judges that the academy has improved, and also that it requires further improvement. The trust recruited good interim principals while there was no permanent Principal. The trust has supported the academy with good-quality reviews of teaching and learning, by helping to recruit community governors and providing support for governance. Its monitoring of the academy's performance data has not, however, been detailed enough to identify clearly those areas where students' progress could be improved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local governing body now contains a full complement of governors. Its members know the academy well and the relative strengths and weaknesses in teaching. The governing body has committees that hold academy leaders to account. Governing body members know that the management of the performance of teachers had weaknesses and they have fully supported the new Principal in making this process more robust. The governing body understands the finances of the academy well, and the spending on the pupil premium. It has established a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the way it has been spent. The governing body has undertaken a review of its skills and processes, and the Ormiston Academies Trust is following this with further training.

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	135979
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	399740

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
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	848
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Preston
Principal	Marie McMahon
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
Telephone number	0121 552 5501
Fax number	0121 511 1326
Email address	enquiry@ormistonsandwell.org.uk

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