

Ormiston Venture Academy

Oriel Avenue, Gorleston, NR31 7JJ

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Inspired leadership from the Principal has transformed the quality of education provided for students. Her determination to raise their aspirations and achievement has led to rapid and sustained improvements.
- A relentless drive to improve teaching quality has made it consistently good and regularly outstanding. Teachers know individual students well. They make sure that students' personal needs are met and that they achieve the challenging targets set for them.
- Based on their low starting points, most students make outstanding progress. Standards have risen from well below to above the national average since opening.
- Students who join the academy with low levels of literacy are promptly taught how to read and write, enabling them to enjoy learning and achieve well. Gaps in their basic skills are filled through intensive, personalised support.
- An innovative, stimulating range of subjects enables most students to enjoy learning and acquire qualifications during and by the end of Key Stage 4. The vast majority are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They attend regularly, are well mannered, courteous and respectful. Students wear their uniforms with pride and aspire to represent the academy as prefects, captains and councillors. Older students enthuse about the improvements that have taken place and say they feel much safer than in the past.
- The concerted drive for sustained improvement is based securely on rigorous, regular monitoring of individual students' progress and wellbeing, including of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Those at risk of underachieving are nurtured and supported so they can meet the high expectations of them.
- Senior and subject leaders work collaboratively to secure improvement. They regularly observe lessons to check the quality of teaching and its impact on learning, and encourage staff to share best practice. Systematic auditing of each subject holds staff accountable for the achievement of students in their care.
- Governors' incisive knowledge of schools makes a major contribution to the academy's ethos and success. They set the highest expectations of staff and students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 part lessons; approximately half of these were carried out jointly with senior staff. In addition, the lead inspector walked the academy with the Principal and made short visits to 10 classrooms during the first day of the inspection to observe the quality of students' personal learning time. Inspectors also observed students during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Board, two groups of students and the Academy Council.
- The lead inspector checked responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Staff questionnaires were not distributed.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised data about students' achievement, looked at behaviour and attendance records, examined documents used by senior leaders to monitor and evaluate the academy's work, and scrutinised students' written work in lessons.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Stanton

Additional Inspector

Rachel Hobson

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ormiston Venture Academy opened in September 2010 in the existing buildings of the predecessor school, Oriel High school. New buildings are currently being constructed and should be ready for use by September 2013. When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The academy is sponsored by the Ormiston Academies Trust and specialises in digital media and mathematics. It has partnerships with Gresham's school, three local primary schools and Norfolk County Council.
- Most students are White British, with very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, mostly moderate learning or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, is above that found nationally. The percentage of students supported through school action and school action plus is above average.
- The proportion eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of students) is much higher than found nationally.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small minority of students are educated off-site at a local pupil referral unit or are taught at home due to their complex medical needs.
- The academy received its first monitoring inspection in April 2012 and was found to be making outstanding progress towards raising standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance students' learning and progress further by:
 - providing them with additional, complementary resources to use in lessons and in their own time to reinforce their learning in mathematics
 - making better use of personal learning time to improve their personal, social and health education.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- On entry to the academy, students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are low. Many older students who joined the academy from the previous school did so with significant gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers waste no time in finding out what individual students know, understand and can do so that they can plan learning suited to their particular needs. In Years 7 and 8, students with limited basic skills in literacy and numeracy attend the academy's 'success centre' to learn how to read and write effectively and improve their confidence and understanding in mathematics. Older students begin GCSE and vocational course in Year 9 and sit examinations early, when they and staff feel they are ready. Many of them acquire a wide range of qualifications and are able to re-sit examinations at a later stage to improve their grades.
- This personalised provision, coupled with excellent teaching and regular monitoring, leads to most students making rapid progress. Standards have risen year-on-year since opening as an academy. The percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE C grades, including English and mathematics, is above the national average. Based on students' low starting points, this represents outstanding progress. Standards achieved in English and science are remarkably high. In mathematics, students make accelerated progress to attain standards that are much closer to the national average. Current monitoring data shows that this pattern of rapid improvement is set to continue this year. For example, over half of all Year 11 students have already achieved at least a grade C in GCSE mathematics.
- In lessons, students make good or outstanding progress. They display positive attitudes, behave responsibly and are eager to learn. Teachers provide them with activities that capture their interest and encourage them to learn by themselves or in small groups for extended periods of time. Individual students are known well and are set challenging but attainable targets that they are expected to meet. Regular reference made to GCSE marking criteria, grades and examination technique reinforces students' understanding of what they need to do to succeed.
- There is little difference in the achievement of different groups of students. Teachers and senior leaders monitor the progress made by each individual student and take swift action if they show signs of not meeting their targets. Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well due to the high quality care and support they receive. Learning in small groups taught by specialist staff help them to catch up in English and mathematics. High quality support from teaching assistants in lessons gives them the confidence to apply these skills in their learning. Seven students taught off-site due to their specific medical or behavioural needs are closely monitored to ensure they remain engaged in learning and continue to achieve well.
- Extra government funding provided to raise the achievement of students eligible for free school meals is used effectively to provide additional literacy support, to monitor attendance and welfare and provide a wealth of enrichment opportunities to promote their success. The gap between what they and other students in the academy achieve is closing quickly and data show that they are achieving equally as well as all students nationally.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All teaching is consistently good or better. This has been achieved through regular staff training and sharing of best practice, and by routine monitoring of lessons to check that teaching leads

to improved learning and progress.

- Observations of lessons by inspectors found that teachers provide students with regular opportunities to learn independently by themselves or work collaboratively in small groups to solve problems, find things out together and share ideas. Where teaching is outstanding, independent study is sustained for extended periods of time, enabling students to learn in-depth and check their own learning and progress. For example, in a Year 8 photography lesson, the teacher facilitated learning by letting students work by themselves for most of the lesson, intervening only when support or advice was needed.
- High quality teaching in most subjects, regular homework and opportunities to catch up on coursework in their personal learning time enables students to learn in depth, reinforce their understanding and broaden their knowledge. However, in discussions with older students they said they would like further resources, such as worksheets and revision tasks, to complement their learning in mathematics and enable them to exceed their expected grades.
- Lesson planning is underpinned by detailed schemes of learning that all teachers are expected to follow. This adds consistency to the quality of their learning because students recognise the common approaches used in different subjects, such as questioning and day-to-day assessment tasks to help them learn well. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, have high expectations of students and develop excellent relations with them. Behaviour is managed consistently well. Teachers retain students' interest and attention by making learning interesting and enjoyable. These characteristics of highly effective teaching do not extend into students' personal, social and health education. Personal learning time is not used well enough, and tasks lack the academic rigour seen in most other lessons to promote high achievement.
- The academy's commitment to tailoring provision to suit individual learners leads to many of them working independently outside of lessons, using computers or working alongside support staff. They do this responsibly and make best use of the time available. Teachers maintain up to date records of the progress all individual students make against their expected grades. Half-termly assessments inform teachers and senior leaders of the need for additional support or further challenge for those not meeting their targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The high expectations of staff are reflected in the excellent behaviour shown by the vast majority of students in lessons and around the academy. Students say that the biggest change over the past two years has been the improvement in behaviour. Disruption of learning in lessons is rare and when it does occur it is tackled effectively by teachers. Arrangements to temporarily seclude a small minority of students unable to meet the academy's expectations are effective in helping them to modify their behaviour and return to regular lessons.
- Students feel quite safe and generally free from bullying. Older students said that there is some name calling and cyber bullying but the academy is taking action to resolve this. All of them knew a member of staff to approach if they had any concerns. Students know the sanctions and rewards used to improve behaviour and most respond well to them. The proportion of students temporarily excluded from the academy has fallen significantly since opening.
- Students show care and respect for one another. The academy is a calm, stimulating and enjoyable place to be. Students regularly volunteer to contribute to the academy by acting as prefects and sports leaders. They value the time and additional support provided for them during lunchtimes and after school to aid their learning and to participate in a range of sporting and cultural activities. Attendance is broadly average. Stronger links between the academy and

parents and carers has led to a significant reduction in persistent absence.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- In a short space of time, the Principal's impressive leadership has secured rapid and sustained improvement. The academy's success in raising achievement is based firmly on senior leaders' unswerving commitment to making sure that all teaching is consistently good or better. Her high expectations and aspirations for all students are shared by all staff. Challenging ingrained weaknesses in behaviour and teaching, together with managing a major building project on the academy site, have not deflected senior leaders' focus away from keeping students' achievement and well-being central to the aims of the academy, so that their needs and aspirations are fully met.
- Students and staff appreciate the changes that have been made to the academy. Innovative approaches to improving the quality of provision, behaviour and attendance have created an ideal environment in which students feel safe and are motivated to learn. This and the academy's active promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enable most of them to thrive. A shortened Key Stage 3 curriculum, individualised programmes of learning, a wide range of suitable courses and early entry into examinations have given all students an equal opportunity to achieve well, and secure the skills they need for their future lives.
- Senior leaders know the academy well because they accurately evaluate how well it is doing on a termly basis. Senior and middle leaders' rigorous analysis of assessment information, regular scrutiny of achievement data and robust management of teachers' performance are embedded in the academy's work. The use of the pupil premium funding is carefully monitored and rigorously applied to supporting students' achievement. Roles and responsibilities are understood fully and all staff are held accountable for raising achievement. The academy is outward-looking and readily seeks partnerships with other local providers and support agencies to strengthen its position in the local community. It is winning increased support from parents and carers who recognise the impact the academy is having on their child's achievement and enjoyment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the Governing Board have shared their expert knowledge and experience of leading, managing and improving schools with the Principal to help the academy to become outstanding. They share the Principal's vision to expand the academy to enable many more students to benefit from what it has to offer. The Chair and Vice-Chair have a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of teaching and have used this information to approve which staff have moved up the salary scale. The excellent support provided by the academy sponsor has been invaluable in enabling the Principal to drive improvements. They and the Governing Board hold senior leaders to account for the academy's performance and know what needs to be done to make further improvements. Safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record are routinely checked to maintain students' safety.

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	136187
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399778

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	618
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley King
Principal	Nicole McCartney
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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