

Ormiston Sudbury Academy

Tudor Road, Sudbury, CO10 1NW

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2014

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' achievement at GCSE is improving rapidly because they are taught well. They make good progress overall and do particularly well in English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the support they are given is well planned and their progress is tracked carefully.
- The sixth form is good and the 16-19 study programme offered to students provides a good range of subjects.
- Students' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to their learning, show good respect for others, look after the academy buildings well, and say that they feel safe.
- Students' progress towards demanding targets is reviewed in good detail and extra support for those who need it is quickly put in place
- Teaching is good and improving strongly because managers at all levels have high expectations and track the impact of teaching well. Teachers plan activities carefully and explain them well to students.
- The Principal and senior leaders have provided strong and effective leadership since the academy was formed through raising standards, developing teaching, improving the range of subjects studied and ensuring that students behave and attend well. They have a clear view of how to improve student achievement still further.
- Governors are experienced and well trained. They have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the academy and have a good understanding of students' progress. They offer good support and challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics and science is not as strong as in English, particularly for younger students.
- Students occasionally allow their standards of behaviour and concentration to drop when the work set does not interest them enough.
- Progress in the sixth form is not consistently strong across all subjects.
- Teachers do not always mark students' work in enough detail so that they know what they need to do to improve, and students do not always respond to their teachers' comments when they are offered.
- Sometimes teachers do not explain what is needed to achieve the higher grades in examination classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, including 11 jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to other lessons, tutor periods and assemblies. They looked at samples of students' work and interviewed groups of students across the age range.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and other members of the senior leadership team, heads of subject faculties, heads of houses, teachers, members of the governing body, and representatives of the academy trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of academy documents, including: the academy's self-evaluation, academy-development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing-body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 72 questionnaires returned by academy staff, together with the 68 responses submitted by parents to the on-line, Parent View, survey.

Inspection team

Roger Waddingham, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Genevieve Usher	Additional Inspector
Clare Cattle	Additional Inspector
Russell Ayling	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ormiston Sudbury Academy is a smaller than average-sized school for students aged from 11 to 18. It converted to academy status in September 2012 and is a member of the Ormiston Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, Sudbury Upper School and Arts College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding allocated by the government for groups of pupils, including those looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The great majority of students attending the academy are White British and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs receiving extra support through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.
- The school offers work-related training for one day per week for 10 students in Y10 and 51 students in Y11 through provision at West Suffolk College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - give clear guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their written work and how they expect them to respond to their comments
 - explain in detail the requirements for higher level working in examination courses.
- Further raise achievement by:
 - making sure that work in mathematics and science always challenges and interests students sufficiently
 - improving progress in the sixth form to be consistently strong across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress from their starting points on entry to the academy and standards are improving strongly from the results in 2013. The work seen during the inspection and information on progress provided by the academy, show that more students are now working in line with national expectations and the proportion of students achieving five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics is likely to be much closer to the national average this year.
- Achievement in English has risen considerably in the past year and students' written work shows good progress across a range of writing styles. Improvements in the marking of written work, closer monitoring of teaching and detailed tracking of student progress have all contributed well to the rise in standards.
- Students are now making better progress in mathematics, especially in their GCSE courses, where they show high levels of interest and concentration, presenting their work well. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge well to promote secure progress in all year groups, especially for more-able students. Occasionally, the work set for younger students does not challenge or interest them well enough.
- Early GCSE entry was used for students in both English and mathematics in 2013. This did not affect their final results as all continued to study these subjects and entered the summer examination as well. The most able students make good progress in a range of examination subjects.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good overall. Students make good progress in a variety of vocational and academic subjects, with particular strengths in the performing arts. However, progress in some science and humanities subjects is not consistently good.
- Science standards are improving. The 2013 results were below the national average because some students entered for subjects that were not well matched to their needs. Work seen in lessons shows that the great majority of students are now making good progress towards demanding GCSE targets, including the higher attaining students who are following the separate sciences course. Sometimes younger students need more guidance on what is expected from them.
- The gap in results between students supported by the pupil premium and their peers is narrowing. In English, Year 11 students were on average over one GCSE grade behind in 2013, while this year's gap is expected to be less than half a grade. In mathematics, the gap has narrowed from over one grade to just under one grade; these students' overall progress from their starting points is now well in line with nationally expected levels for this group.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the support they are given is well planned and their progress is tracked carefully. Students who speak English as an additional language also achieve well.
- Year 7 students who have fallen behind make good progress because the academy uses its additional funding effectively. They are well supported in improving their reading and writing through the academy's accelerated reading programme and individual support on reading and spelling. They develop their mathematical skills well through small group support sessions and

the use of diagnostic testing. Work on reading during tutor period is used to ensure that all students read widely and are heard reading regularly.

- The academy now tracks the achievement of students educated off-site for part of the week in good detail. While students underachieved on these courses in 2013, current students have made good progress and have all met their course requirements.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and has improved strongly as a result of the detailed procedures for tracking the impact of teachers' work on students' learning and the careful identification of individual staff training needs. Senior staff have worked well to ensure that their high expectations for planning and target setting are now consistently put into practice.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan a good range of activities that maintain the interest and involvement of students throughout the length of a lesson. For example in a lesson on coursework in food technology, students concentrated well on their work because the teacher made the aims of the task very clear, explained the requirements for obtaining higher marks carefully, and helped the students individually to identify further work and research they needed to do. Occasionally, some staff do not make the examination requirements clear enough.
- Questioning is often used well in starting activities to promote discussion and give the class teacher a clearer view of what students have already learnt. For example, in one lesson students looked at each other's answers on mini-whiteboards, and in another they reviewed their homework by taking on roles in a discussion.
- In most lessons, teachers plan well to set demanding tasks matching students' previous learning, so that students often have useful opportunities to follow their own lines of enquiry. In some weaker lessons, students are all expected to carry out the same task and teachers do not always make clear what students of different ability levels are expected to achieve.
- Teachers manage behaviour well and relationships in the great majority of classrooms are very positive. Year 11 students in particular showed great maturity in their attitudes to revision work and in helping others in their learning. Support staff are well managed and use their expertise to help individual students and groups of students well both in lessons and in small groups.
- Good examples of detailed comments were seen on students' written work in English in particular, but in other subjects teachers do not always mark students' work in enough detail so that they know what they need to do to improve. Also, students do not consistently have opportunities in class to reflect on the progress they are making.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students say that they enjoy the opportunities for research and independent study which they are given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. They show positive attitudes to all aspects of academy life both in lessons and at other times of the day. Students state clearly that they enjoy being at the academy. Sixth form students are particularly positive about their role in the academy and value the opportunities they are given to develop as learners.

- Students arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn and work at a good pace. They present their work well, and sustain their efforts throughout the lesson. They show good consideration for fellow students, listening carefully to others, cooperating well in groups and taking a responsible attitude, for example, when helping other students with their work.
- Teachers set high expectations for behaviour and attitudes in lessons and the students respond very well. There is a good working atmosphere in many classes, with an effective use of the academy rewards and sanctions policy. Occasionally, younger pupils show less positive attitudes towards temporary staff who are new to them.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they have confidence in the academy's procedures to deal with any bullying or incidents of a racial nature and that such incidents are very rare.
- Attendance was slightly below average last year. However, the academy's current figures show that their actions to improve this aspect of their work have been very successful and attendance is now above average. Exclusion figures have fallen significantly and are now very low.
- Students appreciate the way they are involved in the running of the academy and there is a good range of opportunities for them to take responsibility through subject, house and school councils. Students are very positive about the way the academy cares for their personal development through the house system, individual mentoring and peer support within the mixed-age tutor groups.
- Although some parents expressed concern about students' behaviour in the on-line inspection survey, the response from a much larger academy sample across parents of all age groups showed a more positive view which matches the strong evidence gained from students themselves and from behaviour observed during the inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and senior leaders provide strong and effective leadership of the academy and have a clear view of how to improve student achievement still further. Detailed arrangements for monitoring standards and teaching mean that the academy's action plans are based on reliable evidence and that the impact of initiatives is checked regularly. The resulting subject action plans are implemented with increasing effectiveness because line management meetings are regular and offer a high degree of challenge to subject leaders.
- The academy sets high expectations for students' standards of attainment through demanding targets that are known well to both staff and students. Students' progress is tracked very carefully and the use of student performance information by managers at all levels is a strength of the academy.
- The effectiveness of academy staff is reviewed regularly through discussions of students' progress, regular observations of teaching and well-targeted classroom reviews. Staff feel that the academy offers them good opportunities for their professional development, with appropriate training provided for class teachers, teaching assistants and a wide range of responsibility post holders so that teaching and school leadership are improving well overall.
- The range of academic and work-related subjects on offer has been adjusted carefully to best meet the needs of all students including the more vulnerable. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and results in highly positive outcomes for their

safety, welfare and confidence. Provision for clubs and other after-school activities is good, and students enjoy the very good range of opportunities to develop their performance skills. Students are well prepared for the next stages in their education; they feel the guidance they receive on future career and education opportunities is very helpful.

- The academy has effective systems to ensure that students behave and attend well. There is good provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The coordinator ensures that these students progress well by providing support from specialist staff and training for class teachers.
- Sixth form provision is managed well with regular feedback to students on their progress and careful consideration of the appropriate balance in the 16-19 study programme.
- School leaders have a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and make sure that students feel confident there is no discrimination. The arrangements for safeguarding meet all national requirements and are highly effective.
- The sponsoring trust gives very good support to the academy. Specialist advisers work closely with the academy in carrying out reviews, supporting subject leaders and providing programmes for staff development. Support for financial management, information technology, and governor recruitment is also provided well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are experienced, well trained and know the academy well. They appreciate the importance of student progress data and use it well to hold academy leaders to account.
 - They have a detailed awareness of the academy's self-evaluation of strengths and areas for development, monitoring the resulting action plans well.
 - Recent changes to the committee and meeting structures mean that they now visit the academy more frequently during the working day and evaluate progress in key aspects of the academy plans very effectively using first-hand experience.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching in the academy. They actively oversee the arrangements for teachers' pay progression and receive regular reports on what the school is doing to develop teaching and to tackle any underperformance.
 - Expenditure on the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up for eligible students is monitored regularly at meetings and governors know how well these students achieve.

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	138506
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	425171

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	742
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nye
Principal	Caroline Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01787 375131
Fax number	01787 379101
Email address	principal@ormistonsudbury.co.uk

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