

# Ormiston Park Academy

Nethan Drive, Aveley, RM15 4RU

**Inspection dates** 28–29 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although teaching is improving, leaders have not yet ensured that it is good or better throughout the academy. Students' progress is variable and they do not yet achieve as well as they should.
- Not all teachers use the information they have about students' knowledge and understanding to set engaging work that helps all groups to make good progress.
- When work is too easy or too challenging, a small minority of students do not concentrate and they disrupt the learning of others.
- Sometimes teachers do not check that students have understood new learning before moving them on to the next task. Questioning and discussion does not always allow students to develop their ideas fully.
- Feedback does not always provide students with precise information about how they can improve their work, so some continue to make the same mistakes.
- Some teachers do not plan extra help for students based on a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. This has limited the impact of this support, including for some students who have special educational needs.
- Sometimes teachers work towards improvement targets that lack clarity, which limits their impact.
- Over time, too few Key Stage 4 students have made good or better progress across the different subjects they study. This has limited their achievement.
- Attendance, though improving, remains below the national average.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Many sixth form students have studied courses that have not been a good match for their abilities. This, together with variations in the quality of teaching, has limited their progress and achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The Ormiston Academy Trust and governing body provide leaders with effective support and challenge. The Interim Principal and other leaders have ensured that teaching is improving. New subject leaders understand the improvements needed and how to achieve them.
- The progress of the small number of students with special educational needs who attend the ASCEND unit is good, as is the care and support that they receive.
- Most teachers now have high ambitions for those they teach and challenge students to meet them. As a result, achievement is rising, particularly in English and mathematics, and especially for disadvantaged students.
- Students' conduct around the academy site is generally positive. Behaviour within lessons is much improved. Levels of temporary exclusion are declining.
- Students feel safe and secure at the academy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 29 lessons or parts of lessons, and during tutor periods. Inspectors observed several lessons jointly with senior leaders. They examined evidence of learning over time in a large number of students’ books and files.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during lessons, break periods, and as students arrived in the morning and moved around the academy site.
- Inspectors analysed academy documentation, including that relating to: attendance; exclusions; safeguarding; behaviour; systems for improving teaching and learning; records of the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement planning; and details of its use of additional funding to support disadvantaged students.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online Parent View survey, together with the academy’s own survey results of parental opinion.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Interim Principal, other senior and subject leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, members of the Ormiston Academies Trust and groups of students.

## Inspection team

Jason Howard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Shahed Ahmed

Seconded Inspector

Ann Short

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with a very small sixth form. It is a member of the Ormiston group of academies.
- The large majority of students are White British. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly below the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The academy houses a specially resourced provision for special educational needs. This facility, called the ASCEND unit, which is funded by the local authority, supports 15 students with a statement of special educational needs and who have extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- A number of students attend alternative off-site provision at the Motorvations Centre in Romford.
- Approximately half of students in the sixth form complete some of their qualifications at South Essex College as part of a partnership arrangement.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The current Interim Principal took up his position in September 2014. A large number of teachers have left the school since the end of the last academic year, and there have been significant changes in middle leadership.
- The academy's governing body was reconstituted at the beginning of the current academic year.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that students' progress accelerates, including in the sixth form, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - set students targets that are appropriately challenging, and carefully monitor their progress towards these
  - use all of the information they have about students' progress to plan engaging activities that will help different groups to take the next steps in their learning, including those who have special educational needs
  - check students' understanding is secure before moving them on to new tasks
  - provide additional support that is well matched to students' abilities and individual learning needs so that they catch up quickly
  - encourage students to explain their ideas and develop their answers fully
  - provide feedback that gives subject-specific guidance to students about how they can improve their work, and ensure that students act on the advice they are given.
- Ensure that teachers work towards precise development targets that are based on an accurate assessment of all of the evidence about the impact of their teaching on students' progress.
- Further improve attitudes to learning, so that students try hard during lessons and complete their work to a high standard.
- Ensure that leaders evaluate the impact of the work being done to increase students' attendance, and use this analysis to inform actions that further raise the attendance of all groups.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good enough to enable students to make rapid progress and secure good attainment across different subjects. Over time, senior leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching has been over-generous; weaker teaching has not been tackled with sufficient urgency. Expectations of what students can achieve have been too low.
- The impact made by subject leaders on standards in their areas has been variable. Some, including leaders of English and mathematics, have worked effectively to improve standards in teaching and make sure that the courses students study are well planned. In other subjects, such as the humanities, recently appointed new leaders have not yet had sufficient time to drive up standards but understand key priorities and how to address them. This is because they are managed and supported effectively by senior leaders.
- Senior leaders introduced improved systems for tracking the progress of individuals and groups of students at the beginning of the current academic year. Many middle leaders are using this information to monitor students' progress, plan appropriate additional support for those who need it, and assess the impact of it. Although this is promoting equality of opportunity, some teachers do not use this information when planning lesson activities, additional help for students who have special educational needs and who are supported at school action, or additional 'catch-up' sessions. As a result, these do not always help to close the gaps in students' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers are supported by high quality training and held accountable through revised performance management arrangements that set challenging targets relating to students' progress. However, some teachers' development targets are not precise enough about the areas of their work that need to improve and the criteria that will be used to judge success. This limits the impact of the performance management process on the improvement of teaching.
- Since the beginning of the current academic year, the Interim Principal and other senior leaders have worked to establish an ethos of high expectations so that students 'believe and achieve'. Some difficult decisions have been made; the quality of teaching is improving as a result, including in the sixth form. Leaders have established clear expectations about the standards of behaviour required; as a result, the incidence of disruption to learning is declining. Standards of achievement are rising. The academy has therefore demonstrated its strong capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders have reviewed their use of pupil premium funding; as a result, it is now being used effectively to support disadvantaged students. Additional small-group and one-to-one tuition is helping to narrow the gap between their rates of progress and that of others in the current Year 11, particularly in English and mathematics. The gap is also narrowing in other year groups.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced; students can choose from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects at Key Stages 4 and 5 to meet their needs, interests and abilities. The most able, for example, study GCSE courses that provide a firm foundation for A-level study and any future university application. Trips and visits, after-school enrichment clubs, activities such as the academy's combined cadet force and visiting speakers help promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Leaders have shortened the duration of single lessons to 50 minutes; they have also reduced the proportion of lessons that are 'doubles'. Students appreciate these changes and indicate that they concentrate better in lessons as a result of them.
- The large majority of students are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they understand the difference between right and wrong, their rights and responsibilities, and the importance of Britain's democratic institutions. Students learn the importance of understanding, tolerance and respect for others; racist or homophobic incidents are infrequent because leaders and teachers tackle discrimination effectively. Some groups of students have had few opportunities to gain an understanding of the beliefs of others; leaders have detailed plans in place to address this.

- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. At the time of the inspection, the academy's published safeguarding policy did not reflect recently issued guidance, even though leaders work in accordance with it and their practice is effective. It therefore did not provide all relevant information to parents about the academy's practice. Leaders have now updated this information.
- Careers education helps younger students to gain an understanding of their different career options, and the qualifications and skills they will need to gain access to them, well before they have to choose their Key Stage 4 options. Individual guidance interviews help students to make appropriate choices, given their interests, abilities and ambitions. Some are able to take part in work experience that is directly relevant to their intended futures; leaders have detailed plans in place to expand these opportunities.
- Independent careers advice helps students to choose between different post-16 options. Students are well informed about apprenticeships, employment and further education. Leaders evaluate the quality of advice carefully to ensure that students are guided towards qualifications that are a good match for their abilities as well as their interests.
- The academy's leaders carefully monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of students who attend alternative provision.
- The academy's leaders have been advised by the local authority to arrange for part-time, flexible and temporary educational provision off site for students who attend the ASCEND provision. These students' attendance, behaviour and progress are tracked effectively and safeguarding arrangements for them are secure. Very occasionally, some of these students have worked at home with the support of their parents. On these occasions, leaders have not in the past ensured that these students received their full entitlement to education. Arrangements for these students have been strengthened so that this does not recur in future.
- Representatives of the academy trust have helped leaders to evaluate aspects of the academy's work and identify appropriate priorities for development. Training, including from subject specialist advisers, has developed the capacity of leaders and teachers to drive forward rapidly the necessary improvements. The trust, together with the governing body, holds senior leaders accountable by monitoring progress towards improvement plan objectives rigorously and robustly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They examine data on students' progress very regularly, and ask senior and subject leaders searching questions about it. Governors are included on the Ormiston Academy Trust progress board, which closely monitors the progress and achievement of different groups of students. Governors gain independent information about standards via external reports on the accuracy of teachers' marking and the quality of different aspects of the academy's work.
  - Governors hold senior leaders to account; for example, they have requested information from scrutiny of students' work and from on-going progress data so that they gain a full understanding of the impact of teaching on learning. This scrutiny enables them to check that standards are rising, and to take an appropriate involvement in the management of teachers' performance. Governors make decisions about pay rises that ensure that only effective teachers are rewarded.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. A small minority of students do not concentrate well or work hard. Some lose focus and do not make much progress when working in groups. A small minority of students do not have good learning habits. Some do not bring the correct equipment to lessons, present their work poorly, or do not complete or correct it when prompted to do so.
- Serious or persistent disruption to learning is rare. However, a very small number of students sometimes talk over the teacher, call out answers, or engage in off-task conversations when the activities they are completing do not interest them, or are too easy or too difficult.

- Teachers deal with the sometimes challenging behaviour of students in the ASCEND unit effectively and sensitively. This helps enable these students to make good progress.
- Students' conduct around the academy site, and when being educated off-site, is usually good. They are almost unfailingly polite, sociable and co-operative. The overwhelming majority say they enjoy coming to school.
- The academy's use of fixed-term exclusions is declining. This is because students are responding well to the higher expectations about behaviour.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. The academy's safeguarding practice meets statutory requirements. However, at the time of the inspection, the information provided to parents via the academy's safeguarding policy was not comprehensive, as it did not reflect all aspects of the academy's current practice.
- The academy's monitoring reports indicate that, over time, despite recent improvements, attendance levels remain below the national average.
- Students say that they feel safe and well cared for by their teachers. They understand the different kinds of bullying, indicate that bullying is infrequent, and report that action is taken when it does occur. However, a very small number of students complain that this is not always effective and that name-calling continues.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe, both in and outside of school. They understand how to minimise risks when using the internet; during the inspection, students were able to explain some of the ways in which they do so.
- Staff are well briefed about safeguarding matters and those leading in this area are appropriately trained. Checks are undertaken on adults who work within the school to establish there are no concerns about their suitability to work with children.
- The academy works well with different agencies, and with students' families, to ensure that students are safe outside school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although improved teaching is having a greater impact on students' progress and achievement, its quality remains too variable. Students do not yet make good progress overall.
- Some teachers do not use the information they have about students' progress to plan activities that are appropriately challenging. This means that, sometimes, students are set work that is too easy or too hard, and their progress slows.
- Sometimes, questioning involves very small numbers of students. This prevents teachers from establishing that some students do not understand their learning. As a result, these students are often asked to move on in their work when they are not able to. When learning is most effective, questioning encourages students to explain or develop their ideas, or prompts them to consider those of others.
- Students usually receive regular and effective feedback from their teachers in Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form. Sometimes this feedback lacks precision and students continue to make the same mistakes as a result.
- Teachers across different subjects help students to develop their literacy skills. Many students need additional help with literacy when they join the academy; by the end of Year 11, the overwhelming

majority speak with confidence, read well and write fluently and with accuracy. Additional support is also effective in ensuring that those who are behind in mathematics on joining the academy catch up.

- Teaching within the ASCEND unit is effective, as is the additional support given to the often vulnerable students who learn within it. They make good progress as a result.
- Most teachers are ambitious for their students, recognise that expectations have not been high enough in the past, and are helping students to understand what they are capable of. The overwhelming majority of students are responding to this and are working harder.
- Teachers establish positive and productive relationships with their students. This helps teachers to manage behaviour well.
- Where teaching is particularly effective, teachers address any gaps in students' knowledge and understanding quickly. They use the information they have about students' progress to plan tasks that are highly engaging and appropriately challenging. Teachers use questioning to spot misconceptions and address them, and to enable students to develop, extend and test their thinking. They make clear to students what they are learning and why.
- Many teachers make very clear precisely how students can meet the demands of examination questions, and what they need to do to reach their target grades. This is a particular strength of teaching in English and mathematics, and is helping lead to accelerated progress.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students join the academy with attainment that is significantly lower than average. Far more students begin with low levels of prior achievement than with high levels. Large numbers of students move to the academy having started their education at other secondary schools; many have made limited progress by the time they arrive.
- GCSE results were low in 2014 and too few students gained five GCSE grades of A\* to C including English and mathematics. Not enough students made expected or above expected progress in mathematics or in the humanities. Most students made good or better progress in their English IGCSE qualifications.
- Observations of lessons, scrutiny of the academy's monitoring information and examination of students' books indicate that students currently in the school are making better progress than those who took GCSE examinations last year. They are improving their levels of attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. Some variations in the quality of students' work remain, meaning that progress and achievement are not consistently good.
- In GCSE examinations in 2014, disadvantaged students achieved just over a grade lower than others at the academy, and others nationally, in English. The gaps were wider in mathematics, at one and a half grades lower than other students nationally and over a grade below others at the academy. Disadvantaged students did not make sufficient progress in English and mathematics. Disadvantaged students in the current Year 11 are on track to attain almost as highly as others. Gaps in other year groups are also narrowing considerably.
- The academy's monitoring information indicates that the most able usually make good progress. Books and observations show that they work well, particularly when tasks are demanding and expectations of them are high. Additional sessions are in place for students aiming for A\* and A grades in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics; during the inspection, students spoke with appreciation about their impact. However, the most able are not always challenged sufficiently. Sometimes, they are given the same work as other students, which they find too easy.
- Most disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress from their individual starting points that is in line with that of other students. Those who attend the ASCEND centre, and those who have a statement of special educational needs, make good progress because of the effective work of

leaders to support these vulnerable students. Some students who have special educational needs and who are supported at school action make less progress than they should because the feedback they are given about how to improve their work is not precise enough. Additional support is not always tailored to these students' individual learning needs.

- Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been used to help students who start at the academy with low levels of literacy and numeracy to catch up. This is helping them to make good progress and achieve across their other subjects.
- The small number of students who regularly attend alternative provision off site are doing well on their motor vehicle mechanics courses.
- The academy has entered students early for some GCSE examinations. This has not disadvantaged students as they have been able to re-take qualifications and improve their grades after additional teaching. Those meeting or exceeding their target after first entry have been able to complete additional qualifications.

### **The sixth form provision** requires improvement

- Over time, too few students in the sixth form have made sufficient progress and achieved well in their post-16 qualifications. This is largely because, in the past, too many students have studied courses that were not a good match for their needs and abilities. Leaders have addressed this by improving the quality of guidance that students receive when considering their post-16 options, widening the range of courses available, and applying entry criteria more robustly.
- Previous targets set for students have been insufficiently ambitious, given these students' prior attainment. This limited teachers' expectations of them, and students' own ambitions. Students are now working towards more demanding targets. The head of sixth form works effectively with subject leaders at the academy and the partner college to track students' progress towards these carefully, and ensure those who need it receive additional help.
- Over time, the quality of teaching in the sixth form has been variable. The academy's records indicate that it has improved considerably during the current academic year, but that its impact on students' learning and progress remains uneven. This is supported by observations of learning during the inspection. Some activities students complete are insufficiently challenging, or do not promote their engagement.
- The quality of feedback that students receive is also variable in quality and impact. Sometimes, it is imprecise about how students can improve further. Feedback is particularly strong in BTEC science, business studies and childcare, and in A level physics and mathematics. Many, though by no means all students re-draft work in response to their feedback.
- The academy's monitoring information indicates that sixth form students' rates of progress have accelerated during the current academic year, and that they are on course to achieve more highly in the 2015 examinations. Although this was supported by observations of students' learning and scrutiny of books and files during this inspection, the extent of this improvement is variable.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching are enabling higher proportions of those who are re-taking GCSE English or mathematics to gain grades at C or above than has been the case in the past. Most of those who re-took the examinations in November 2014 did so.
- Leaders ensure that sixth form students are safe and well cared for. They receive very good information about how to stay safe and healthy through sessions run by the academy's on-site National Health Service team. Because the sixth form is small, staff know each individual student very well and relationships are positive. Students' conduct around the academy is generally good, and disruption to learning in lessons is rare.
- Sixth form students receive impartial and helpful careers advice. Leaders have increased the support



available to those applying for university. Subject-specific university 'taster days' are helping to encourage an increasing number of students to apply for university, including those who are disadvantaged.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135960
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	461668

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	530
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gwayne Webb
<b>Principal</b>	Huw Derrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 865180
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	info@ormistonpark.org.uk

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