

# Ormiston Forge Academy

Wright's Lane, Cradley Heath, West Midlands B64 6QU.

## Inspection dates

22–23 March 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection and pupils are now making good progress across a range of subjects.
- The governing body and multi-academy trust know the school well and have played a key role in improving standards. The principal and his senior leadership team have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of education that is provided for pupils.
- Pupils enjoy teaching that is consistently good or better in nearly all subjects. This is because school leaders have organised effective training for teachers that has helped them to develop and improve.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and successfully convey this to pupils, which helps them to fully understand the work.
- The school has successfully developed pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers regularly check the progress made by pupils in lessons and when assessing their written work. They provide useful guidance to help pupils to improve their work.
- Pupils and learners across the school speak enthusiastically about their experience of attending school and of the opportunities they are provided with.
- Pupils behave in a mature and responsible way. They enjoy positive relationships with each other and with school staff.
- Teachers provide useful guidance and good support for pupils. As a result, pupils feel well cared for and safe.
- The school has successfully narrowed gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others, particularly in key stage 3.
- Learners enrolled in 16–19 study programmes make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress made by pupils in mathematics has improved, but is still not as rapid as that in English and other curriculum subjects.
- The school has taken action to improve teaching for the most-able pupils, but this needs to develop further.
- Assessment arrangements in key stage 3 do not match the increased expectations of the school's curriculum.

## Full report

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

- Further improve pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - making sure that the most-able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons to ensure they make rapid progress and reach the highest grades
  - ensuring that pupils of all abilities have high aspirations that they strive to achieve.
- Ensuring that the key stage 3 curriculum prepares pupils effectively for examination courses in the future by:
  - checking that all subject leaders are developing effective plans to ensure the requirements of the school's planned new curriculum are fully met
  - designing and implementing an assessment system that accurately reflects pupils' progress against the school's new curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school has improved rapidly and securely in recent years. The principal has played a significant role in bringing this about due to his tireless determination to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed. The principal has a very detailed and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has demonstrated that he is able to bring about change through carefully planned strategies.
- The principal has high expectations of leaders and teachers across the school. He, along with the senior leaders, has worked effectively to target improvements in teaching and behaviour and, in doing so, has successfully changed the culture of the school. Staff and pupils have responded positively to these changes and there is a shared desire to improve further.
- The school has invested in the development of the 'Success Centre', which is designed to ensure that vulnerable pupils are given every opportunity to thrive in their time at the school. This offers personalised provision for each individual and is highly effective in supporting their emotional, social and academic needs. Pupils who have used this resource speak enthusiastically about the support they have received. For example, one pupil described staff in the centre as being 'like my family'.
- Senior leaders have put in place effective systems to hold middle leaders and teachers to account for pupils' performance. These are clearly understood and supported by school staff and prove useful in targeting support for specific subjects, as well as for groups of pupils and individuals.
- The school has invested successfully in the continuing professional development of teachers and leaders. This has resulted in improvements in teaching over time and helped the school to develop new leaders to take on positions of responsibility.
- Leaders have introduced a school literacy strategy to ensure that pupils apply their reading and writing skills well in all subjects. For example, recent training for teachers has already had a significant impact in helping pupils improve the way they tackle word problems in mathematics lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported by well-targeted spending of the pupil premium funding. This is helping them to improve their performance. There are still gaps in achievement between them and other pupils, but these are closing rapidly and securely.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils' work in different subjects is enhanced by thematic work which encourages pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills. For example, Year 8 pupils were creating masks after learning about ancient Greek theatre.
- Leaders are aware that the assessment system in key stage 3, which is still based on National Curriculum levels, does not match the increased expectations for pupils' attainment within the school's current curriculum. Leaders are devising a new assessment system that will underpin a new key stage 3 curriculum from September 2016.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are varied and there is a strong take-up of these by pupils. Pupils spoke warmly of the popular house competition which includes many sporting and academic competitions. The school is particularly proud of its work in promoting enterprise. For example, a group of pupils reached the national final in a competition organised by the Peter Jones Foundation and attended a prize-giving ceremony at Buckingham Palace.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed in a number of different ways. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs as part of their lessons in religious studies and this is also explored in time spent with their form tutors. Teachers work effectively with pupils to explore issues of national and global significance and encourage them to discuss these openly.
- The school has taken advantage of a range of external support provided through Ormiston Academies Trust, as well as Sandwell local authority. This has helped the school learn from the success of others and has contributed to successful school improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Members of the local governing body have a strong working knowledge of the school. They ably support and challenge the principal. Governors have a firm understanding of the way in which the school is run and care passionately about securing further improvements.
  - Governors have a clear understanding of how pupil premium funds are spent to support the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. They work closely with the principal to ensure that strategies employed are carefully evaluated and adapted.
  - Ormiston Academies Trust support the school effectively in a variety of ways. For example, they have

played a significant role in supporting the principal to swiftly tackle underperformance.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a clear culture of safeguarding across the school. Rigorous systems are in place to keep pupils safe. Regular training is provided for staff, which results in them being knowledgeable about what they need to do if they are concerned about any pupil's welfare. The school works effectively with other agencies in order to appropriately safeguard pupils and learners.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and explain new learning clearly. This is helping pupils to make good progress across key stages and in different subjects.
- Middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning very effectively. As a result of well-directed training, teachers understand how to teach effectively. Teachers told inspectors that they appreciate the opportunity to reflect on and contribute to the evaluation of their own performance. The outcome of this is motivated staff who are striving for continuous improvement.
- Teachers have detailed information about pupils' individual characteristics, learning needs and rates of progress. They use this effectively to adapt their teaching. This means that pupils effectively access the work that teachers set for them. They know how to get help if they find the work too difficult and feel confident that they will be supported by their teachers to improve their work.
- Teachers' questions are effective in lessons and this leads to enthusiastic responses from a range of different pupils. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and increasingly respond to teachers' written comments on their assessed work. This supports their good progress.
- Teachers in different subjects ensure that there are good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading and writing skills. This means that pupils are learning to use and apply these skills effectively in different situations and for different purposes.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know what they have done well and how they need to improve their work. Increasingly, pupils respond to this advice and, as a result, do not repeat previous mistakes and are able to make more rapid progress in their learning.
- The most-able pupils report that they are sometimes given extra challenges in lessons in order to ensure they progress quickly. Inspectors found that this is not consistent practice and the work given to some of the most-able pupils is too easy. This means that these pupils do not make the progress they could.
- Although teaching is improving in mathematics, pupils sometimes lack confidence in their own ability to do well in this subject.
- The assessment system currently used in key stage 3 does not fully match the curriculum. As a result, teachers' judgements about pupils' achievement are less secure in this part of the school.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There is a supportive culture of shared responsibility in the school which promotes pupils' well-being and emotional welfare.
- Pupils are proud to be part of the school. They typically present themselves as polite and confident individuals. They are comfortable and relaxed in the presence of each other and adults.
- Pupils show a strong understanding of how to keep safe and of the dangers they may be exposed to. They are given the opportunity to explore these issues in tutor periods and also through curriculum lessons. As a result, they know what to do if they feel unsafe.
- Pupils report there is little bullying in the school and, when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by school staff. In discussions with inspectors, pupils showed a good understanding of different types of bullying and of what they should do if they experienced or encountered bullying.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and throughout the day. They are quick to get to work at the start of lessons when instructed to by their teachers. They work studiously and do not distract one another when required to work independently. However, they also respond enthusiastically when given the opportunity to discuss work in small groups.

- Exercise books and files are very well maintained by the vast majority of pupils, demonstrating the pride they take in their work.
- The careers provision for pupils is effective and appreciated by pupils and learners. Individual interviews are provided which help inform individuals of the range of opportunities available for future study and employment. The school supports pupils in organising appropriate work experience so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives, including employment.
- The school's arrangements to help new pupils settle in quickly are particularly effective. For example, Year 6 pupils from nine feeder primary schools are invited to attend the school for two days each week for the remainder of the summer term following their end of key stage 2 assessments. This provision is supplemented by a two-week summer school, which aims to ensure that these pupils make a positive start to their secondary education.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Inspectors observed very little disruptive behaviour during the course of the inspection. This was equally true in lessons and during breaks when pupils were enjoying leisure time or engaging in extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils enjoy their time at the school. Their attendance is high as they appreciate the work their teachers do to help them learn and make progress. They enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers.
- The school's behaviour for learning policy is applied consistently by all staff and is fully understood by pupils. There is a clear structure of sanctions for when pupils misbehave. The school has worked to ensure that this includes an element of restorative justice, with pupils given the opportunity to put things right when they have made a mistake. The school rewards pupils' good behaviour in a number of ways, including through the 'my sticker' system, which gives pupils the opportunity to purchase products through an online system.
- The 'Success Centre' has played a significant role in improving the behaviour of pupils over time. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on the reasons for poor behaviour and given active support to address them and make the necessary improvements. This provision is greatly appreciated by those pupils who use it. School leaders can point to striking evidence of how behaviour has improved as a result of this provision.
- The number of pupils being excluded from the school is falling and is below the national average for all schools.
- Attendance has improved rapidly in recent years and is above the national average. Punctuality is also improving, although inspectors observed some examples of pupils arriving late to lessons.
- Where teaching is less effective, pupils lose focus and become distracted from their learning. Although this was observed during the inspection, school records indicate that teaching over time has improved and this feature of lessons is becoming less frequent.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have shown consistent and marked improvement since 2013. GCSE results have improved in each of the last three years and the school forecasts they will improve further in 2016. Inspection evidence from the school's own assessment information, pupils' written work and observations in lessons indicate that pupils are now making good progress. As a result, pupils are now better prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Historically, attainment and progress made by pupils in English has been stronger than that in mathematics. While differences do still exist with current pupils, improved teaching of mathematics, brought about through changes in staffing, alongside effective training for teachers, is now helping to accelerate the progress made by pupils. This is particularly apparent in key stage 3, where pupils progress just as quickly in mathematics as they do in other subject areas.
- Pupils' progress has improved considerably in the last few years. In 2015, the progress made by pupils by the end of key stage 4 was similar to the average for all pupils nationally. Pupils' achievement in humanities is particularly strong.
- Current pupils with special educational needs make good progress and teachers and leaders keep a very close eye on how these pupils perform. A range of useful strategies have been developed to support

individual pupils and these are shared appropriately between teachers and used carefully and proactively in lessons.

- Progress made by disadvantaged pupils is improving over time and attainment gaps have narrowed between these pupils and others in the school. In key stage 3, there is currently no gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others. The school forecasts that the remaining gaps will disappear over the coming years. Inspection evidence supports the view that disadvantaged pupils are now making good and improving progress.
- Pupils who have learned English as an additional language are supported effectively to make good progress during their time in the school.
- Pupils and learners are well prepared for life after school. The overwhelming majority go on to further education, training and employment.
- The school has focused on improving the progress made by the most-able pupils by providing carefully designed training for teachers. While this is beginning to have an impact in helping current pupils to make more rapid progress, further work needs to be done to ensure that the most-able pupils have the opportunity to reach the highest grades in all the subjects that they study.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Learners make good progress from their starting points on both academic and vocational courses. As a result, increasing numbers of Year 11 pupils are opting to stay on for the school sixth form.
- Learners who have not managed to get C grades in English and mathematics at GCSE are supported to reach these standards during their time in the sixth form, although success rates in mathematics are below those in English.
- Strategies to raise learners' aspirations are now having an impact and, as a result, increasing numbers are applying successfully to university courses and apprenticeships. All Year 12 learners have a focused higher education week in the summer term each year, which includes visits from universities, as well as seminars on student finance.
- Good leadership in the sixth form has focused clearly on ensuring that learners meet or exceed their target grades. Learners' progress towards these is carefully monitored and suitable interventions put in place where they are in danger of underachieving.
- Teaching in the sixth form is appropriately matched to the needs of learners and supports them to make good progress. Learners reported that teachers are always prepared to offer additional support and guidance to them outside of formal lessons so that they can fully understand the work set and make good progress.
- In discussions with an inspector, sixth form learners shared their satisfaction with their education at the school and stated they would happily recommend the sixth form to pupils in lower years. Learners were particularly appreciative of the strong support given to them in preparing for university and job applications.
- Learners conduct themselves consistently well in lessons and reported to inspectors that they feel supported by the school's staff in keeping safe.
- A wide range of enrichment opportunities are provided to complement the academic and vocational programmes that learners are following. For example, guest speakers have been invited to speak to sixth form learners and there have also been visits arranged to universities. In addition, learners are able to take complementary courses in finance and enterprise, as well as pursuing an extended project qualification.
- The vast majority of learners complete their sixth form courses. All who join the school are provided with the full 16–19 study programme, including relevant work experience opportunities.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137673
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002503

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy – sponsor led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,274
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Ormiston Academies Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Rayner
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew Burns
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 566598
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ormistonforgeacademy.co.uk">www.ormistonforgeacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:information@ormistonforgeacademy.co.uk">information@ormistonforgeacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19–20 November 2013

## Information about this school

- Ormiston Forge Academy is a larger than average secondary school and has a sixth form. It has held academy status since 2011 and is part of Ormiston Academies Trust.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding given to schools to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a significant turnover in teaching staff and new leaders have taken on a range of new responsibilities.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across 66 lessons. Ten of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was sampled in all lessons and inspectors also met with groups of pupils and looked at their work across a range of subjects. An inspector observed paired reading between Year 11 and Year 7 pupils.
- A range of school documents were carefully examined, including the school's own self-evaluation, information on the current progress made by pupils and learners, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with pupils across years 7 to 13 and their views were also sought during break and lunchtime as well as during lessons.
- Meetings were held with four members of the local governing body and two representatives from Ormiston Academies Trust. Discussions also took place with senior leaders, subject leaders and those members of staff responsible for the pastoral care and guidance of pupils.
- Inspectors evaluated the responses of 32 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the views of 41 members of staff received through questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Thomas Walton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector
Bernice Astling	Ofsted Inspector
Mel Ford	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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