

Wodensborough Ormiston Academy

Hydes Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0DR

Inspection dates

12–13 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership prior to the last academic year had little positive impact on pupils' outcomes. The quality of current leadership overall, and middle leadership in particular, still require improvement because pupils' progress in most subjects is well below average.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet having a sufficiently strong impact on the progress pupils make. Teachers' questioning is not yet good enough and not all teachers use information about pupils' starting points to stretch and challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Pupils' attendance, although improving, is too low to enable all pupils to make the progress they are capable of.
- Leaders are not ensuring that all teachers implement school policies on behaviour management and on marking and feedback consistently and effectively so that they have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Although current leaders are tackling behavioural issues that were not dealt with effectively by previous leaders, exclusions are still too high. Behaviour is not yet good enough to contribute well to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' outcomes, in terms of progress from starting points and standards reached, require improvement across most subject areas. Differences between the achievement of individual groups of pupils and last year's national benchmarks are too great.

The school has the following strengths

- The drive and ambition of the principal is quickly and effectively raising expectations about what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils' outcomes are improving.
- Current governors' understanding of the school is sound, as is the rigour with which they challenge school leaders.
- Provision to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, and their understanding of British values, is effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the risks pupils face, and actions to keep them safe are effective.
- Recently, particularly since the arrival of the current principal in January 2016, leaders, working through the Ormiston Academy Trust, have made stronger use of support from external schools and partners.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the overall quality of leadership so that it has a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. In particular, ensure that:
 - the school's policies on marking and feedback and on behaviour management are implemented consistently and effectively by all teachers
 - middle leadership improves so that all heads of departments, but particularly science and geography, are instrumental in improving the quality of teaching in their subjects and in ensuring that pupils make the progress that they are capable of.
- Improve the quality of teaching across all subjects, and in particular in science and geography, so that pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. Do this by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' questioning so that it encourages pupils to think deeply and helps develop their oral skills
 - ensuring that teachers provide more challenge in teaching and learning activities so that pupils, from all starting points, have the opportunity and motivation to make at least good progress
- Rapidly improve attendance and reduce fixed-term exclusions so that all pupils are in school and have the opportunity to learn well and make good progress. In doing this, ensure that pupils take more responsibility for their own behaviour and incidents of low-level disruption are eradicated.
- Improve the progress pupils make in all subjects so that it is at least in line with national averages. Ensure that differences between the progress made by different groups of pupils, compared to the national benchmarks of pupils with similar starting points, rapidly diminish.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, since the school opened as an academy in November 2013, the impact of leadership on improving pupils' outcomes has been poor. The decline in achievement and the deterioration in attendance and behaviour outcomes in that time suggest that the Ormiston Academy Trust did not intervene early enough or with sufficient urgency to minimise the impact of previous weak leadership. It is only in the last year, and particularly since January 2016, when the current principal joined the school and the trust intensified its support, that significant improvement, which can be sustained, is evident.
- Historically, the school has struggled to recruit and retain staff. This has had a negative impact on pupils' outcomes in the past, particularly in science, mathematics and humanities. However, the current principal is addressing these issues and the school is now fully staffed with specialists for the first time in a number of years.
- The principal's strong leadership, her high expectations and ambition for pupils in the school, and her drive and boldness to change things for the better is having a significant impact on the culture of the school, on the motivation of leaders and staff, on the attitudes of pupils and on the engagement of parents.
- Leaders are open to new ideas and welcome external scrutiny of their work, for example in relation to provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders thoughtfully adapt action plans in response to external support and consistently check the impact of plans with colleagues, pupils and parents.
- Despite the extensive support that the school is currently receiving from the trust and other external partners to rectify legacy problems, there is no indication that leaders lack independent capacity to improve. Their self-evaluation indicates an accurate and perceptive analysis of the school's performance in all aspects of its work. At the core of the improvements are the leadership strengths of the principal. She leads by example and provides a strong role model for senior and middle leaders and all staff and pupils.
- All areas of the school are improving rapidly because the principal has introduced sharper and more joined-up monitoring systems. However, senior and middle leaders are not yet having a sufficiently rapid impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes to ensure that the school becomes a good school quickly. They are not yet ensuring that teachers consistently and effectively implement school policies on behaviour management and on marking and feedback.
- Leaders use the information from the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment to set teachers individual targets. These are based on the accurate identification of strengths and areas for development, and are followed by appropriate professional development, at whole-school and individual teacher level. As a result, poor performance is being more promptly and effectively tackled. The impact of professional development is evident in improved teaching and outcomes, particularly in art, business studies, history and mathematics. However, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are not improving at the same rate in all subjects because not all middle leaders yet have the experience and expertise to facilitate this.

- Leaders systematically check pupils' progress and intervene promptly. Interventions are becoming more effective, as evident in the fact that differences between the progress made by groups of pupils are diminishing gradually. Monitoring data on pupils' progress is extensive, clear and easy to understand. Extensive external moderation of teachers' assessment assures the accuracy of the school's assessment information.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is targeted carefully. The school has accurately identified the main barriers faced by pupils who are eligible for this funding and planned interventions address these barriers directly. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used diligently and effectively to ensure that the progress made by these pupils is improving.
- The principal has significantly changed the curriculum. It now provides pupils with a suitably broad range of subjects that more effectively supports their development and progress. Carefully thought out pathways ensure that less-able pupils are given extra time to work at securing their basic literacy and numeracy skills and the most able pupils follow suitably challenging academic subjects, such as ancient history and Latin.
- A wealth of enrichment opportunities, including an art club, sports fixtures and theatre visits, are provided. British values underpin the design of the curriculum, which ensures that pupils develop a strong understanding of how to keep safe, know about other faiths and cultures, and about democracy, and develop tolerant attitudes to difference. Partnerships, with a range of external agencies, have further enhanced pupils' experiences and make a powerful contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders are embedding aspiration into careers information, advice and guidance, for example by organising university visits and developing contacts with apprenticeship providers to demonstrate to pupils the type of opportunities available. The curriculum for pupils who attend alternative providers is appropriate and meets their needs.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve engagement with parents and the community, and relationships are now improving. Attendance at parents' evenings has risen sharply this year and parents speak positively of the improvements that leaders have made to the school since the appointment of the new principal. Parents appreciate the school has changed and continues to change. They value the care and support offered to pupils and parents. A comment from one parent was, 'It's as if the school is putting its arms around you.'

Governance of the school

- In January 2016, the trust appointed a new governing body, including a new chair of governors. Members of the new governing body have a sound knowledge and an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have properly prioritised the main areas for improvements and are engaging effectively with parents and the local community.
- Governors judge safeguarding as a priority for the school and support the school in the development of its increasingly strong and vigilant safeguarding culture.
- Governors actively challenge school leaders on key areas for improvement, while effectively supporting them. Minutes of governing body meetings indicate the probing

questions they ask school leaders about, for example, the impact of pupil premium funding and strategies to improve attendance and reduce exclusions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The approach to safeguarding has been completely overhauled since the principal joined the school. It has a high profile. Strong leadership and a specialist team ensure that there is good capacity to deal with the particular issues faced by the school. Leaders have a good understanding of the risks confronting pupils in this school and proactively seek support from external agencies to engage families and reduce risks to pupils. Staff are well trained and receive regular updates and reminders.
- Past issues about site safety have been addressed and the new security personnel, CCTV and regular perimeter checks, together with an increased staff presence on the school site, mean that pupils now feel very safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching learning and assessment requires improvement because it has not enabled most pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving but is still too variable across years and subjects to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to make consistently good progress. Pupils note that teaching varies in quality. They rate English, mathematics and performing arts highly but are least positive about geography and science. Their views reflect the leaders' own evaluation and evidence from observations by inspectors.
- Not all teachers consistently implement the school's behaviour management policy, which means that low-level disruption continues to occur in some lessons. However, a majority of teachers have high expectations and use well-established routines for behaviour, which pupils understand and comply with promptly.
- Teachers' questioning often fails to encourage pupils to think deeply or to develop their oral skills, nor is it always used effectively to check whether pupils have understood. However, where practice is strong, teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils and help them develop more sophisticated ways of thinking.
- In some subjects, teachers are not implementing the school's marking and feedback policy consistently or effectively. Their feedback is often too vague to help pupils understand how to improve or they are not identifying poor-quality presentation, or spelling and punctuation errors. In stronger subjects, teachers apply the guidance consistently and pupils are more knowledgeable about how to improve their work.
- Too often, teachers fail to use assessment information about pupils when planning learning tasks and so pupils are not able to make the progress of which they are capable. The level of challenge for pupils of different abilities and with different starting points is not consistent or high enough, so that some pupils are bored because the work is too easy and some are struggling because it is too hard. This lack of challenge is particularly acute for the most able pupils in the school.
- In the majority of lessons teachers use engaging activities so that pupils are motivated

to learn. For example, in performing arts lessons, a wide variety of visual resources were used, pupils engaged well together and used role play imaginatively. As a result, pupils in these well-planned lessons behaved and learned well and developed confidence in their oral skills.

- Support for the development of pupils' literacy skills is improving. A wide range of reading interventions, including the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) for early readers, are having a positive impact on the reading ages of all year groups, particularly at key stage 3.
- The help provided by support assistants to individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are in the early stages of learning English is improving the progress they make. Joint planning of learning between teachers and support assistants contributes to this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils have the opportunity to become school leaders in a variety of different fields and around 150 have done so. These opportunities, ranging from student councillors to school site stewards, are improving pupils' confidence and encouraging them to become much more involved in the life of the school. However, not all pupils take advantage of these opportunities and not all are clear about what is needed to be successful learners. This is being tackled effectively with the higher expectations that are being promoted across the academy.
- Leaders regularly visit the alternative providers that pupils attend. They thoroughly check the quality of safeguarding and provision, and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have quickly acted upon the recommendations of an external review of provision for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities. As a result, greater emphasis is now placed on the progress these pupils make as well as ensuring that their personal needs are well supported. The dedication and commitment of staff in the Autism Resource Centre and the Deaf Academy provide pupils with appropriate care and support that is rapidly improving academic and personal outcomes for them.
- Inspectors met with, and explored the support offered to, a range of pupils who face challenging circumstances, including pupils who attend the above centres, those who are persistent non-attenders, those on alternative provision, those who are looked after and also the most able disadvantaged pupils. In each case, evidence indicates that these pupils have made rapidly improving personal and academic progress from their starting points as a result of expert and dedicated staff, very good quality care and support, and a curriculum that increasingly meets their needs.
- The school is taking robust and timely action on many fronts to tackle bullying and hate crime and to keep pupils safe. Pupils are well informed about the risks they face and report confidently about how they are taught to keep themselves safe, including about e-safety and extremism. They have a sound understanding of what constitutes unacceptable and derogatory language and the consequences of using such language.

Analysis of school information indicates that the number of bullying incidents is declining and pupils themselves say that staff are dealing with incidents that do occur promptly and effectively. Safeguarding workshops, for example about cyber bullying, are attended by parents, who see the school as a safe place for their children.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Current leaders have had to deal with the effect of a history of disruptive behaviour in the school. This resulted in high levels of exclusions.
- A new behaviour management policy is now in place. Leaders have insisted on higher expectations of behaviour and are driving more consistency in the application of the new policy. Although most staff work hard to create a calm and orderly environment, not all staff are implementing consequences and rewards consistently and effectively yet. However, there are clear indications that the impact of this new policy is positive. Behaviour has improved and continues to improve and the number of pupils being excluded more than once has fallen by 50%. However, leaders still have much to do to ensure that good behaviour is the norm in the school and to reduce exclusions.
- Many pupils who spoke to inspectors said that behaviour had improved since the principal joined the school in January 2016. Parents say that they welcome the clear boundaries and consequences now in place. Attitudes to learning of most pupils are positive and most pupils increasingly want to learn. This was reflected in lessons observed during the inspection.
- Despite improvements to behaviour overall, not enough pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and rely too much on teachers' supervision of this.
- Too many pupils have been frequently absent from school. Although attendance is now improving, it is still below average. Punctuality is improving across all year groups.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Attainment for the 2016 Year 11 cohort was low and the progress they made from their starting points was below what it should be. Despite this, there was improvement in attainment across almost all subjects. Outcomes in English language declined in 2016, but improved in English literature. Outcomes in mathematics improved. In some subjects, such as business studies and art, this improvement was considerable. Achievement in the performing arts is strong.
- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because their achievement has been well below what it should be, given their starting points. However, pupils currently in the school are now beginning to catch up, with many making expected progress in response to stronger teaching.
- School information that the progress made by pupils from all starting points, in all year groups and across most subjects is improving rapidly was supported by discussions with pupils, observations of them at work in lessons and work in pupils' books. This evidence also indicates improvement in the security, breadth and depth of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skill across a range of subjects.
- The progress of Year 11 pupils, including the most able pupils, in recent years has

been far too low. However, school information about current Year 11 pupils, including the most able pupils, and about pupils in other year groups, shows rapidly rising progress. Outcomes in science and in geography have been weak and the progress of pupils in these subjects is still limited, although now showing some signs of improvement. Progress in English and in mathematics is now improving strongly. This is the result of improved teaching and leadership in these subject areas. More improvement is evident for younger pupils than for current Year 11 pupils. The school still has a long way to go to reach national benchmarks in relation to attainment but it is improving strongly in relation to the progress pupils are making and these improvements are sustainable.

- Literacy levels are rising quickly across most pupil groups. Strong improvements have taken place in pupils' reading ages as a result of effective interventions and support, including, where appropriate, the teaching of phonics.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is improving as a result of how leaders are using pupil premium funding. The difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, and other pupils nationally with the same starting points, is diminishing, according to last year's benchmarks, but it is still too high.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the Autism Resource Centre and the Deaf Academy, are making quicker progress and are improving in line with their peers. This is a result of the improved information about their needs, more tailored support and increased accountability of staff who work with them.
- Many of the most able pupils in the school are increasingly making the progress they are capable of and more are making better progress. However, this improvement is not consistent because there is not yet sufficient challenge in the teaching they receive to promote better progress among this group of pupils.
- The achievement of pupils who attend alternative providers is similar to that of other pupils in the school and, like them, is improving.
- The school helped the vast majority of pupils in Year 11 to move on to appropriate destinations in employment, education or training. The school's destination information compares favourably with that of other schools in the local area.

School details

Unique reference number	139918
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10018480

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	883
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gwayne Webb
Principal	Ms Leigh Moore
Telephone number	01215064300
Website	www.woacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@woacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school became an academy sponsored by the Ormiston Academy Trust in November 2013.
- The school has two specialist resourced provisions on site: the Autism Resource Centre (known as ARC), with approximately 10 pupils, and the Deaf Academy, for approximately six pupils with hearing impairment.
- As well as receiving support from the Ormiston Academy Trust, the school works with a range of external partners. It has received support from Holte School – an outstanding school led by an executive principal who is a national leader of education (NLE).
- The school uses four alternative providers of education: Impact Education and Training

Ltd, The Albion Foundation, Whiteheath Education Centre and Sandwell Community School.

- The school does not meet the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Over 50% of pupils on roll are eligible for pupil premium funding, which is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and/or disability or those with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in parts of 46 lessons, some of which were observed during joint learning walks with senior leaders. Visits were also made to a range of lessons to review pupils' work in their books and the quality of marking and feedback. Inspectors attended an assembly, visited a number of form periods, observed a number of one-to-one support sessions, and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders and with pupils from all year groups as well as with individual pupils. Meetings were held with the chair and a member of the local governing body, and with the regional director of the Ormiston Academy Trust. Inspectors also met with members of the parent forum and a local authority behaviour representative.
- Visits were made to the main provider of alternative education, to the school's Autism Resource Centre, the Deaf Academy and to its reflection and consequences rooms.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school at break and lunchtimes and at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed school information about pupils' achievement and the progress they are making, about the quality of teaching and learning, about safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and exclusions. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans were reviewed and minutes of governing body meetings were scrutinised.
- The 40 responses on Parent View and the 36 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire were considered, together with the school's own staff, pupil and parent surveys.

Inspection team

Gwen Coates, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Broomfield	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Mallett	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Owen	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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