

Ormiston Park Academy

Nethan Drive, Aveley, Essex RM15 4RU

Inspection dates

20–21 April 2017

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

- Leaders, including governors and the Ormiston Academies Trust, have created a culture of high expectations and rapid, sustainable improvement.
- Leaders and managers have a precise understanding of the progress pupils make. They use this information well to support those pupils who fall behind.
- Leaders have skilfully developed curriculum pathways that match pupils' needs and enable them to make good progress.
- Pupils are proud to be at the school and are typically kind and respectful towards each other. Pupils explain that bullying is rare and they feel safe in school.
- Pupils typically behave well. They are supportive of each other in their learning. However, a small number of pupils, often in key stage 3, take longer to adapt to the school's systems and ethos.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and are well cared for. Many progress into higher education or employment.
- Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school and welcome the improvements since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have strong systems for supporting the personal development and well-being of pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- Teachers use assessment information and good subject knowledge well to plan appropriate learning for pupils. In a small number of lessons where this is not done as well, pupils do not progress as rapidly. There is currently not enough sharing of good practice across departments to make the maximum impact.
- Pupils, many of whom enter the school with attainment well below their peers nationally, make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is due to the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the precise support that they receive.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well in the school's ASCEND centre. They make good progress.
- Most pupils attend well and leaders are generally robust in monitoring and improving attendance. However, the attendance of some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and some disadvantaged pupils, is not as strong. There is a need to review and amend strategies to promote attendance to ensure that the attendance of these pupils improves.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - sharing good practice across departments to improve teaching strategies that support the needs of a wider range of pupils.
- Improve the behaviour where required of a small number of pupils in key stage 3 by:
 - supporting pupils who need to develop skills that allow them to make positive behaviour choices and develop more mature attitudes to their learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - reviewing and amending strategies to improve the attendance of pupils, including some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or are disadvantaged.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The widely respected principal, supported well by his senior team, has developed the distinctive ethos of 'believe and achieve' which is at the heart of each aspect of the school's work. This is leading to rapid school improvement. One parent commented on the positive difference that the school has made for her child, and put this down to the way her child has been supported to believe that he can achieve.
- The principal and his senior team have an accurate understanding of the quality of education provided. They have correctly identified the actions they need to take to make further improvements.
- Leaders use funding for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. They keep a close eye on this spending to make sure that it is being best used to enable pupils to make good progress.
- The pupil premium is spent well. Leaders link it to interventions so that disadvantaged pupils are able to keep up with their peers.
- The spending of the additional catch-up funding is well planned and is part of a whole-school literacy strategy to ensure that those pupils who join the school with below average attainment catch up quickly.
- Transition from primary school involves a careful assessment of all pupils' needs in order that the appropriate support can be put into place. It involves the school's special educational needs coordinator working as part of a team.
- Leaders rightly set high expectations for pupils' conduct and achievement. Leaders and managers model the conduct they expect of pupils. As a consequence, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders set aspirational targets and then monitor them closely, rigorously evaluating performance to identify trends for intervention and improvement.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Using this information, the principal manages teachers' and leaders' performance well. Performance management targets are linked to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, there is a link between pupils' outcomes and the management of teachers' performance.
- Subject leaders are effective in their work. Improvements in English have led to high standards and very good outcomes for pupils. Subject leaders share the principal's deeply held ambition that each pupil can and should achieve well.
- Leaders routinely encourage open and honest discussions about how to improve teaching and learning. The science department has shown a strong improvement and was recently awarded a 'gold standard award' from the trust. Inspectors observed good examples of high levels of challenge in science lessons.

- Leaders have made sure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well throughout the curriculum and through a variety of interesting activities. Year 7 pupils worked cooperatively when taking part in a hula-hoop activity which was part of a tutor group challenge. There was excitement, competition and enjoyment with pupils learning about teamwork.
- Leaders skilfully ensure that the curriculum reflects the needs of pupils and that they are motivated and challenged to do well. They have made sure that the curriculum provides a range of suitable approaches to meet individual pupils' needs. Pupils can follow a choice of work-related or academic courses, which make considerable demands on them.
- Leaders have been very successful in making sure that almost all pupils who leave Ormiston Park Academy continue in education, employment or training. Appropriate careers education, advice and guidance begin early in Year 7 and are a central part of the school's citizenship, personal and religious education course. Pupils value the work that takes place in tutorials, assemblies and the citizenship, personal and religious education programme in helping them to make informed choices about their futures.
- The Ormiston Academies Trust supports the school by providing external help from consultants and its own team to improve and develop teachers' professional skills. The trust also plays a role in verifying and moderating assessment. Staff from other trust schools work with the school to evaluate its effectiveness and to moderate progress.

Governance

- Governors are experienced and offer a broad range of expertise. They understand their roles and work closely with the trust to support and challenge the leaders in the school well.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of the quality of education provided. They take appropriate steps to assure themselves of the accuracy of the information they receive about the performance of the school.
- Governors monitor the school's achievement targets and ask challenging questions about areas of underperformance. They have an accurate understanding of the impact of how well the pupil premium and catch-up grants are spent and where they still need to focus to make even more of a difference.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and this is reflected in the accurate self-evaluation plans to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils in all key stages explained to inspectors that they feel safe and know whom to go to when they have any anxieties or concerns.
- The governing body ensures that the school meets its statutory duties and governors make regular visits to audit each aspect of the safeguarding work.
- There is regular training for staff. Information displayed around the school supports visitors, pupils and staff in understanding how to keep safe.

- The website is used well to share activities, events and policies. The school runs a parents' evening to support wider understanding of the safeguarding culture. A parent wrote to explain that she feels safeguarding is 'above excellent'.
- The school's educational partners are carefully checked to safeguard pupils involved in alternative or off-site provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have rightly made improving teaching a central aspect of their work. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are now good.
- Teachers make good use of detailed information about what pupils can and should achieve. In many lessons, teachers use this information well to plan learning that interests and challenges pupils. Sharing good practice across departments is happening but could be developed further to support a wider range of pupils in those subject areas that still need to improve.
- Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge and skilful questioning to enable pupils to make good progress. This was observed by inspectors in a range of subjects and across all key stages.
- Teachers use a good range of strategies to ensure that pupils' literacy skills are developed well. For example, as a result of the teacher's skilful use of phonics, pupils struggling with their reading in a science class developed a deeper understanding of the subject.
- In many subjects, teachers develop imaginative tasks that enable pupils, including the most able, to evaluate the work of others and to feed back what they need to do to improve. Pupils in one physical education lesson, for example, relished the opportunity to work collaboratively as they consolidated their own knowledge and understanding of the shot put.
- The school's literacy strategy is clear and focused on helping pupils to access the curriculum fully. As a result of effective spending of the government's catch-up funding, pupils make good progress in literacy when they enter the school with below-average attainment.
- Teachers provide well for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They deploy teaching assistants precisely. Teaching assistants were observed supporting pupils to make rapid progress in their learning. For example, as a result of the persistent and sensitive support of a teaching assistant, a pupil increased his confidence when engaged in technology practical work.
- Teachers are increasingly skilled in challenging the most able. In a key stage 3 mathematics lesson, as a result of the teacher's skilful choice of equations activities, pupils were able to progress rapidly onto more challenging, extended tasks that deepened and tested their understanding of mathematical concepts.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are committed to providing the highest quality of care and are focused on ensuring that the well-being of pupils is a priority. This is an integral part of the citizenship, personal and religious education programme of activities.
- Pupils demonstrate increasing confidence and pride in their learning. They commonly respect each other's views, especially when engaged in discussions and practical activities.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of settings. For example, pupils could explain the strategies they would use to stay safe online. Pupils informed inspectors that the skills learned in the school's citizenship, personal and religious education programme are important in helping them to keep safe.
- Pupils develop important leadership skills through activities such as the 'students for solutions' team. Members of this team were keen to explain how they are making a difference for pupils across the school through the work they do. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities such as the Combined Cadet Force or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of the skills necessary for life in modern Britain. Fundamental British values are taught through a range of citizenship, personal and religious education sessions, assemblies and in lessons. The bright displays around the school are a constant reminder of these values. In one assembly, pupils reflected maturely on their own values and beliefs. They were able to think about honesty, hard work and ambition, and share their views across their year group.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying and are confident in knowing what to do if they have any concerns. They said that bullying is rare and adults deal with it rapidly if instances occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils generally behave in a calm and orderly way around the school site. They show respect for each other and this is reflected in their conduct. Inspectors noted the politeness of pupils and their pride when speaking about their school.
- Pupils demonstrated positive attitudes when they discussed their work in lessons and with inspectors. Pupils were keen to explain what they were doing and to help others in group work. In a minority of key stage 3 lessons, where the work was not well matched to their needs, a small number of pupils' attitudes did not reflect the high standards set by their peers.
- Pupils in the ASCEND unit proudly shared their work with inspectors and were delighted with the progress they were making.

- On his appointment, the principal made clear his high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have worked with considerable success to ensure that pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good. The impact of this is seen in a reduction of negative behaviour incidents and exclusions.
- Pupils attend well. Overall attendance has improved rapidly as a result of interventions prompted by close monitoring and raised expectations. Leaders have ensured that for the small number of pupils who need support to improve their attendance, there is a clear system for following up absence.
- Pupils attending off-site alternative provision are closely monitored in terms of attendance and achievement. Any concerns are followed up through regular communications and interventions.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Very many pupils enter the school with attainment below that of their peers nationally. Inspection evidence, including a scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of the school's externally moderated assessment information, demonstrates that pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Inspectors tested the reliability of the school's own assessment data which was showing current pupils in most groups making good progress. This confirmed the school's performance data as accurate.
- Pupils' attainment in English improved significantly in 2016 and was above the national average. Given pupils' starting points, this represented good progress. Similar good progress is also evident in current pupils' work.
- Mathematics attainment fell in 2016 because of particular needs within that cohort of pupils. Information provided by the school indicated that mathematics attainment is improving and that current pupils across all year groups are making good progress towards challenging targets. Inspectors found this to be the case.
- Lower-ability pupils' attainment and progress in 2016 were good in science and languages and very good in English. This was because of the school's focus on improving teaching and outcomes for this group of pupils.
- The school identified that there was a need to focus on improving middle-ability pupils' progress across a range of subjects, including in mathematics, science and humanities. Teachers were able to track the progress of these pupils very closely and intervene to support them as necessary. As a result of this focus, there has been a consistently improving picture over time.
- The proportions of pupils with high prior attainment were low in each year group in 2016. The progress of the most able pupils has improved over time and they made good progress in 2016 in humanities, science and languages. Current school progress data shows that the most able pupils continue to make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress, while below the national average in 2016, improved on 2015. Books show that disadvantaged pupils' progress has increased further and is now good, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have, from their different starting points, made good progress. This is because of good monitoring, teaching and support for these pupils.

- Pupils attending the ASCEND unit are making good and sometimes better progress from their different starting points. Leaders gather a wide range of evidence about their needs and interests when they join the unit that enables them to plan appropriate learning activities and resources to accelerate their progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leaders of the 16 to 19 study programmes have created a culture of high expectations. They set students aspirational targets and support them well to achieve their best. Students explained that one of the really good things about the sixth form is the close mentoring and support they have to achieve well. Leaders have ensured that students, many of whom who have low prior attainment, make good progress from their different starting points.
- Study programmes are tailored to meet the needs of the students. Individual pathways are developed during the transition process from key stage 4. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with the sixth-form leaders to arrange support for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students said they are well supported and know whom to go to for advice, guidance and support.
- Leaders ensure that students receive appropriate and timely careers advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their futures.
- The study programmes include a strong citizenship, personal and religious education element that prepares students well for their next steps. Students said they feel they have learned how to manage different real-life situations. They explained it is helping them to become confident and independent. The programme includes preparation for employment as well as study support, summer work placements and work experience.
- Very few students drop out of their courses. They continue on to a range of higher education, training and employment destinations. Their success has improved over the past three years and current students are ambitious for their futures.
- Students behave impeccably. They are well motivated in their lessons and show positive attitudes to learning. They are respectful of each other.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers challenge the students effectively. Teachers use questioning well in most lessons and plan learning that is appropriate to the needs of the students. For example, students in a Year 12 English lesson were challenged to explore complex ideas in a poetry discussion and the teacher's skilful questioning helped them to do so with confidence.
- Leaders monitor students' attendance very closely. Students typically attend well and where any concerns are raised, appropriate support is given to reduce absence. Interventions are implemented to support those underachieving or not attending well.
- Students make good progress from their starting points. For example, students studying physics AS level and sports studies last year progressed well and achieved outcomes that were significantly above the national averages.

- Disadvantaged students' progress was not significantly different from others in both academic and applied courses in 2016. Current students continue to make good progress.
- Students are given information about promoting fundamental British values, financial capability, resisting radicalism and how to keep safe.
- Some students enter the sixth form with entry level or level 1 qualifications in mathematics or English. The school aspires for them to reach GCSE level 2. Some students have succeeded and most are making progress towards the next level of achievement.

School details

Unique reference number	135960
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10031395

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	539
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	40
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	David Sword
Principal	Huw Derrick
Telephone number	01708 865 180
Website	www.ormistonpark.org.uk
Email address	hderrick@ormistonpark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 April 2015

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 is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with 539 pupils on roll and this includes a very small sixth form of 40. It is a member of the Ormiston Trust group of academies.
- The current principal took up post in September 2014.
- Most pupils are White British and the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The school has a facility specially resourced by the local authority called 'ASCEND'. This provision supports up to 20 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan, and have extreme emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- A very small number of pupils access alternative provision at a local provider, Futures Gateways, and from the South Essex College 14 to 16 programme.
- The sixth form has a partnership agreement with South Essex College and some pupils access courses off site at this centre.
- The school meets current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out 39 learning observations, some jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Tutorial sessions and one assembly were observed.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and together with senior leaders, and talked to pupils from all key stages and those in the ASCEND unit.
- Inspectors had discussions with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, newly qualified teachers, governors, the academy trust sponsor, the sixth-form partnership manager from the college and the alternative education provider.
- Inspectors were able to review a range of documents from the academy including case studies, attendance records, safeguarding records, the self-evaluation, assessment data for current and former pupils, and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the six free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, seven pupils' responses, one written parental comment, two parental phone calls and 25 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Russell Ayling, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Leach	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector

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