

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



11 September 2017

Ms Leigh Moore
Principal
Wodensborough Ormiston Academy
Hydes Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
WS10 0DR

Dear Ms Moore

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wodensborough Ormiston Academy

Following my visit to your school on 19 July 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and the trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, a representative of Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT, the school's sponsor), and colleagues from support services commissioned from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I undertook brief visits to a number of lessons, accompanied by members of the senior leadership team, and looked at examples of pupils' work. I evaluated a range of documents and records, including the school improvement plan, information about attendance and behaviour and school policies.

Context

You restructured the school's senior leadership team and reorganised the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders soon after the previous inspection. You also reorganised and consolidated an extended senior leadership team at this point. Your plans for the restructured middle leadership are in place for September 2017. The school's governance is shared with Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy, a nearby school within OAT. Successful recruitment of staff has resulted in some new teaching appointments. Further new teaching staff are due to join the school in September 2017. Some of these appointments have been in subjects identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. You expect the school to be fully staffed from September 2017.

Main findings

Your recent changes to leadership structures respond to clearly identified strategic priorities and the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have made additional appointments within faculties that create additional capacity to focus on driving improvements in teaching and learning, for example the progress most-able pupils make. The new middle leadership structure ensures that there are opportunities for increased levels of collaboration between faculties to identify and use the most effective practice to develop teaching and learning across the school.

Middle leaders shape clear strategic plans that prioritise further improvements in teachers' effectiveness and ensure that staff are consistent in meeting leaders' expectations. Pupils studying subjects that were identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection have benefited from strengthened subject leadership. For example, you expect increases in pupils' attainment in GCSE geography this year, particularly at higher grades. New teaching staff have increased pupils' interest in geography, and there is an increase in the proportion of Year 9 pupils opting for this subject at key stage 4. In science, recent changes in leadership and staffing have contributed to improvement in attainment for pupils currently in Year 10 and in key stage 3.

In lessons, pupils are engaged with their learning as a result of the positive working relationships that staff have developed. Pupils also work well with each other. Teachers regularly circulate classrooms, offering support and advice to pupils when they are working independently. In some lessons, teachers are too ready to help pupils solve any problems they encounter in their work, rather than supporting them to find other ways to move on with their learning. As a result, some pupils are over-reliant on their teachers.

Teachers' questioning is improving. Teachers regularly expect pupils to give explanations and reasons for their answers, and will pursue this with supplementary questions if required. Pupils are keen to contribute to class discussions and share their knowledge with teachers and their peers.

Teachers plan lessons well and make sure that learning tasks take into account pupils' starting points. However, teachers do not use ongoing assessment in lessons consistently well to adjust the direction of the lesson. As a result, sometimes pupils are not given the opportunity to move on to more challenging work when they are ready to do so.

At the last inspection, you were directed to improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching. New ways for pupils to review and learn from their previous work have been introduced. These systems remain flexible and are adapted well to suit different subjects. Leaders' policies are now applied throughout the school. Staff consistently implement leaders' expectations regarding this, although there is some variability in the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning. Leaders now have a clear, systematic approach to monitor the effectiveness of this and other strategies to improve pupils' learning.

The proportion of pupils who are excluded from school has reduced this year. Pupils who continue to have difficulty meeting leaders' expectations of conduct are successfully identified, and additional early support is put in place to help them. In the past, too many disadvantaged pupils were excluded from the school. This proportion has diminished during the year. However, the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are excluded remains too high. Leaders adapt the curriculum and make sure that there is support to develop social skills so that these pupils are integrated into the school.

Leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance have been successful. Overall rates of attendance continue to improve, but still remain below the national average. Attendance is stronger for younger pupils, particularly for those currently in key stage 3, but has improved across all year groups. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to be absent more often than other pupils.

Your recent analysis of assessment information for pupils in Year 11 shows that their achievements are improving compared with results in 2016. Improvements are particularly notable across option subjects and there is clear improvement in English and mathematics. You identify that progress remains variable between some subjects. More pupils are studying for qualifications that contribute to the English baccalaureate because of changes to the school's curriculum. The attainment of younger pupils is increasing across a range of subjects. Pupils with high levels of prior attainment lower down the school are making better rates of progress. However, most-able Year 11 pupils have not benefited from recent improvements to teaching as much, and their progress remains too low.

External support

A wide range of effective external support has been provided by OAT. For example, the principal benefited from mentoring and human resource support to successfully restructure the leadership team. OAT has provided successful support and additional capacity in subjects identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection. This support resulted in improvements in the effectiveness of some colleagues and also provided opportunities for leaders to recruit new members of staff. Senior trust advisers and colleagues from other trust schools work closely with school staff to develop their skills. For example, they have modelled effective lesson observation and provided opportunities to develop common schemes of work.

School leaders benefit from close and effective links with the local authority. For example, support makes sure that vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are included and supported in the school. The local authority has also contributed to the school's successful behaviour improvement plans. These have led to a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are excluded from the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sandwell. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rob Hackfath
Her Majesty's Inspector