

Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

Barnfield Avenue, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6EP

Inspection dates

31 October – 1 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leadership has not been stable until recently. Accordingly, school leaders have not sustained the strengths seen at the previous inspection in 2012.
- In 2017, Year 11 pupils did not achieve as well as others nationally across a range of academic subjects. Pupils' outcomes, although improving, remain low in geography, mathematics and science.
- School leaders, including middle leaders, do not systematically monitor and evaluate pupils' performance. As a result, school improvement plans are not effective enough.
- Leaders have not used additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Therefore, the outcomes of this group of pupils have not improved consistently.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. It requires improvement in mathematics and is too variable within and across subjects. Accordingly, leadership requires improvement in these areas.
- Teachers do not routinely set pupils work that matches their starting points. Consequently pupils, including those who are most able, do not make the progress that they should.
- Pupils are not routinely challenged by some compulsory examination subjects in key stage 4. These courses do not match pupils' starting points or aspirations.
- Leaders of the sixth form have not ensured that the 16 to 19 study programmes have been implemented fully. Some students have insufficient opportunities to fulfil their work experience and careers guidance entitlement.

The school has the following strengths

- The governing body have responded to difficulties that the school has faced effectively. They have challenged weak senior leadership and a new principal was appointed in September 2017.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for in school. Pupils' attendance and conduct are usually good.
- Teaching is routinely strong in a range of areas, including English, music, dance and vocational option subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported. Most attend school regularly and make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that school leaders, including subject leaders, monitor and evaluate plans systematically, so that improvements are more consistent.
- Continue to review the curriculum, especially in key stage 4, so that all pupils study the examination subjects that support their next steps effectively.
- Ensure that improvements in subject leadership continue, especially in geography, mathematics and science.
- Continue to improve outcomes so that all pupils can achieve what they are capable of, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils in mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers challenge pupils, including those who are the most able, appropriately in lessons so that they make good progress.
- Further improve the sixth-form study programme, so that all students receive their full entitlement to work experience and careers guidance.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school's leadership has not been successful in sustaining the good quality of education seen at the previous inspection in November 2012. Following a period of instability in the role of principal, a substantive principal was appointed in September 2017.
- School leaders have, until recently, had an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness and this has held back the improvements that have been required. The recently appointed principal and the school's governing board now have an accurate understanding of the priorities which reflect the developmental needs of the school and their actions are beginning to improve some of these areas.
- Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of improvement plans and other information about the school are not rigorous enough. As a result, plans are not adjusted to ensure that they are fully effective. The recently appointed principal has acted to prioritise the improvement of this area.
- School leaders have not used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Leaders do not assess or review the impact of actions and interventions for disadvantaged pupils well enough, so improvements in these pupils' outcomes remain inconsistent.
- The impact of Year 7 catch-up funding is not clear. Interventions are not routinely monitored, evaluated and reported to show how well pupils have progressed.
- Subject leadership requires improvement because there is inconsistency between subjects. The stronger leaders, such as those in English, dance and music, monitor teaching and outcomes effectively and adjust where necessary. Monitoring is not strong enough in geography, mathematics and science so actions are not making the required improvements in accelerating pupils' progress.
- The subjects that pupils study, particularly at key stage 4, require improvement. The compulsory examination courses that all pupils study in business, computing and sport are not well matched to the starting points and aspirations of some of the pupils who follow them. However, pupils benefit from the English, mathematics and science courses and the academic and vocational options that they follow. These courses provide pupils with a good curriculum experience across a range of subjects and interests.
- The curriculum for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and appreciation of fundamental British values is effective. Pupils elect representatives to a school parliament and the local area youth parliament. Pupils explore issues relevant to modern Britain and the values that underpin British society regularly, including in their Every Child Matters (ECM) lessons.
- School leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular options, with more than 200 activities taking place most weeks and three quarters of the pupils at the school participating in them. Leaders are investigating the barriers that prevent others from joining in, so that they can act to support all pupils to benefit from this rich and varied extra-curricular offer.

- Leadership of careers education, information, advice and guidance is better than was previously the case. Consequently, almost all pupils who completed Year 11 move on to education, employment or training. Senior leaders acknowledge that monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision so that all pupils move on to the next steps that they should is an area to sharpen.
- Staff say that the expectations and training shared by school leaders have supported recent improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. For example, teachers are routinely aware of pupils' starting points because they know that the activities that they plan for pupils require challenge. However, further improvement is required to ensure that teachers apply this training consistently.
- The new principal has introduced performance management systems and expectations which are more rigorous than was the case previously. They link to pay progression and staff training. Leaders set and review targets, which include those relating to the standard of teaching and outcomes of pupils. Staff and school leaders are not automatically eligible for pay progression if they do not meet targets.
- Leaders have used funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. The support for these pupils is well matched to their specific requirements. Consequently, the funding is having a positive impact on the outcomes and attendance of many of these pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the school's governing body, through the Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy Trust. The school is the sole member of this trust. School improvement work, some financial services and an annual review of the school's effectiveness are provided by the Ormiston Academies Trust, of which the school is a member.
- The governing board has steered the school through a period of instability at senior leadership level effectively. They have challenged the school's leadership robustly in recent times and appointed a new principal in September 2017. Accordingly, all staff who responded to the survey at the time of the inspection said that the school was well led, as did most parents.
- The governing board's experience and expertise in the areas and duties that they are required to lead and manage is a strength. They fulfil roles outside of school that complement those of effective governance, including as national leads for governance. They fulfil their duties to ensure the financial well-being of the school astutely.
- The governor responsible for safeguarding has work-related expertise in this area and works closely with leaders to check that the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are effective. All members of the governing body fully understand their responsibilities in this area and regularly spot-check pupils' safeguarding on their visits to the school.
- Governors' monitoring of the leadership of the school in some crucial areas has been limited previously. For example, governors have not been provided with clear enough information on how effectively pupil premium funding has been used to raise the achievement of eligible pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders promote the high priority given to the safety and well-being of pupils. Leaders, including governors, audit systems and practice regularly to ensure that where training and additional learning can improve safeguarding it is implemented swiftly.
- Staff, including non-teaching staff, are vigilant in identifying potential risks to pupils, such as radicalisation, alcohol or drug-related dangers and sexual exploitation. Concerns are reported and acted upon effectively.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- School leaders work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies and act swiftly when required. Referrals are followed up in a robust manner and record-keeping is good.
- Most pupils and parents say that pupils feel safe and are well looked after. Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including in e-safety. Pupils know whom to report concerns to and how to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently strong enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. There is too much variability across and within subjects.
- Teachers do not routinely use the information they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. Therefore, pupils often complete the same work as their peers, regardless of whether it is too easy or too hard for them. Pupils, including those with high starting points and those beginning Year 7, are not provided with the challenge that allows them to make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' work consistently across and within some subjects, so improvements made since the previous inspection require strengthening. Pupils' misconceptions are not routinely picked up on or improved effectively in mathematics and science, so assessment requires improvement in these areas. Pupils are making stronger progress in other subjects, including English and Spanish, because they are given direction and time to correct errors.
- Most teachers plan and use questioning to support pupils' learning. However, questioning is not routinely effective, because it often lacks the rigour to ensure that pupils think deeply and respond easily and fluently. Where teachers ask questions that expect pupils to think and reason deeply, such as in English, dance, hairdressing and music, pupils respond with detail and fluency. Accordingly, the learning of pupils in these subjects is strong.
- Pupils learn how to write in different styles across a range of subjects and they record information effectively. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply their writing skills, for example in writing longer pieces of work, so they are weaker in this aspect.

- Overall teachers manage behaviour successfully and ensure good standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Accordingly, most pupils take care over the presentation of their work, bring the correct equipment and behave well. Pupils' attitudes to learning occasionally decline when work fails to engage and challenge pupils or set high expectations.
- Pupils read regularly and most read well. Many begin Year 7 as capable and confident readers and teachers and leaders plan activities that improve their reading effectively.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are taught well. Consequently, they are successful when moving on to further education, employment or training.
- Leaders, teachers and other adults know pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. They plan and support the learning of these pupils effectively. Accordingly, many of these pupils now attend school more regularly than was the case previously and in most cases they make good progress from their starting points.
- School systems monitoring homework require improvement, because leaders are not effectively assessing and evaluating the homework that is set. However, parents say that homework is set regularly and that the work that is set is usually of an appropriate standard.
- School leaders provided inspectors with reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain clear and useful information about pupils' recent outcomes. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Almost all pupils speak positively about their school. Most say that they would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils learn to respect differences and tolerate views that are different from their own, including in Every Child Matters (ECM) lessons each morning. They learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures regularly. Pupils say that neither pupils nor staff tolerate racism or homophobia. Pupils say that bullying is dealt with effectively when teachers or leaders are aware of it, although it can occasionally be missed.
- Leaders plan the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school effectively. Year 7 pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they are happy and value the information and support that they have received during their first weeks at the school.
- Pupils know how to identify dangers and remain safe online. They value the regular and thorough training and reminders that they receive in this area. They are supported by the online safety systems established by school leaders.
- Most pupils, including those who completed Ofsted's pupil survey, say that the school

teaches them how to remain mentally and physically healthy.

- The school provides effectively for the personal development and welfare of the very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average. School leaders have been effective in encouraging some pupils who have been persistently absent in the past to attend school more regularly, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with that of other pupils nationally and their rates of persistent absence continue to improve.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning. They listen to teachers and participate in activities in class. Pupils take pride in their work in subjects where teachers have high expectations.
- The school is an orderly place. Pupils are polite and have positive relationships with one another and staff. The school environment is engaging and maintained to a good standard. Accordingly, most pupils treat it with respect.
- Pupils move around the school in a calm manner at break, lunchtime and at the change of lessons. They arrive punctually to lessons.
- School leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Provisional 2017 examination results indicate that outcomes across a broad range of subjects were in line with the national average. However, the variation in results across subjects was significant. Pupils often made stronger progress in option and vocational subjects than they did in academic ones, including English and mathematics.
- Provisional 2017 results indicate that pupils attained high outcomes in compulsory examination subjects in business, computing and sport. A minority of pupils sat examinations in two different qualifications which covered the same or similar content in computing. These courses did not routinely meet pupils' needs and develop the skills of which they were capable so that they were ready for their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Records provided by school leaders and inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work show that more, but not all, pupils are now learning at a faster rate. For example, current pupils in Spanish and history are making stronger progress overall than previous groups of pupils. However, variation remains within and across subjects.
- Provisional 2017 results in English and mathematics indicate that outcomes were lower than the national average. The work of current pupils in English shows that many more are working at the level expected of their age and making better progress than others previously. However, variation remains in mathematics, so the improvement is less evident than in English.

- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were in line with others nationally in Year 11 across a range of subjects in 2017. However, they were not consistently good in English, mathematics, science and other academic subjects. Assessment records shared by school leaders and work seen by inspectors show that the differences between current pupils and others are diminishing because disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than was the case previously overall. Despite these improvements, inconsistencies remain across and between subjects.
- The outcomes of the most able pupils across a range of subjects in 2016 were broadly in line with those of others nationally. However, they remain variable within and between subjects because teachers do not routinely set the most able pupils work that challenges them. For example, these pupils make strong progress in English, dance and music but their progress requires improvement in mathematics, science and geography.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities usually make good progress across a range of subjects, because of their better attendance and because of leaders and teachers meeting the requirements of these pupils effectively.
- Leaders monitor the outcomes of the very small number of pupils who follow alternative provision effectively. Consequently, they are generally good and these pupils all move on to next steps in further education, employment or training.
- Information provided by school leaders shows that the proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who progress to further education, employment or training is well above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- School leaders do not ensure that essential aspects of the 16 to 19 study programmes are implemented fully. Accordingly, this area requires improvement. For example, few students undertake work experience. Furthermore, too many students say that they have not been provided with impartial and high-quality careers guidance. Consequently, many students are not receiving their 16 to 19 study programme entitlement, too many pupils do not complete Year 13 and school leaders are not routinely supporting students' next steps in education, employment or training as well as they should be.
- Students' personal and social curriculum requires improvement. Students who spoke with inspectors were not routinely positive about the quality of their learning in this aspect. For example, they said that opportunities for fundraising and student leadership were too few. Some said that they felt 'left out' of the wider school and wanted to be more involved.
- Students can choose from a wide range of academic, applied and technical courses, so many of them follow subjects that are well matched to their interests. However, because students' careers guidance requires improvement, a significant proportion of students who begin Year 12 do not complete their courses, because their subject choices are not the right ones for them. Accordingly, figures provided by school leaders indicate that 82% of students who started Year 12 completed their courses recently and 87% of those who began Year 13 stayed until the end of the academic year.

- School leaders are not able to show the outcomes of students who enter Year 12 needing to retake English and/or mathematics clearly. This aspect of the sixth form is not routinely monitored, evaluated and reported to show how well pupils have progressed.
- Safeguarding in the sixth form is effective. Leaders monitor students' attendance regularly and contact students and parents if they fail to attend lessons. Students are punctual to lessons and they say that behaviour in them is good.
- In 2016, students' level 3 outcomes were strong. For those who followed academic courses to the end of Year 13, students' progress was broadly in line with the national average. Students who studied applied and technical courses made progress that was typically better than others nationally. Provisional 2017 results indicate that outcomes remain strong.
- Teachers and leaders monitor the progress that students make regularly. Leaders inform parents and provide support to students if they start to fall behind. Consequently, students say that they know what they need to do to improve and that they are helped to do so effectively.
- The numbers of students who move on to further education, employment and/or training having completed Year 13 is rising. The figure provided by school leaders for Year 13 leavers in 2017 was 97%. Approximately 40% of students moved on to follow university courses, a small number of which were at Russell Group universities.

School details

Unique reference number	136185
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10043224

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 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,000
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Cunliffe
Principal	Emlyn Wright
Telephone number	01928 711643
Website	www.ormistonbolingbrokeacademy.co.uk
Email address	e.wright@ob-ac.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

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 meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students and those supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities supported by the school is in

line with the national average. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.

- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at The Bridge School Runcorn and Stuart Gelling International Limited.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, members of the Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy Trust governing body and the regional director of the Ormiston Academies Trust.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on issues including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of supporting documentation such as the school’s self-evaluation, the school’s improvement plan, the school’s assessment information, the school’s pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors considered 129 responses to the Ofsted online pupil questionnaire, 28 responses to the Ofsted online parental questionnaire and 44 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these lesson observations.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils’ books by undertaking a work analysis.

Inspection team

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Andrew Cooper	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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