

Wodensborough Ormiston Academy

Hydes Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0DR

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils make slower progress than those of similar abilities in other schools. This has been the case for a number of years. However, their progress is improving and the gap is closing.
- While the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, teachers do not consistently apply the school's systems. This means that pupils, including the most able, do not make good progress. Pupils are stretched in some subjects and coast in others.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers do not routinely share good practice across the school. This leads to variability in teaching.
- Although they are starting to make better progress, boys in key stage 4 are not achieving as well as they could because of weak teaching in the past. Girls' progress is more secure and has been over time.
- Disadvantaged pupils make substantially less progress than other pupils. This is because their attendance is low and, in the past, leaders' plans to help them have been less effective. Current outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving, albeit slowly.
- Pupils have concerns about the variability in teaching, including how teachers manage occasional disruptive behaviour in classrooms.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving across all key areas. The principal has the full support of the community. She is relentless in her ambition for higher standards in this inclusive and welcoming school.
- As leaders work toward their goal of providing pupils with a good education, behaviour and attendance have improved and standards are beginning to rise.
- The work of governors and the Ormiston Academies Trust has been pivotal in bringing about improvements.
- Pupils feel safe at school. The vast majority enjoy school and older pupils are proud of the improvements that have been made.
- Leaders make sure that the range of subjects pupils experience is broad and relevant to them. Leaders ensure that the wider aspects of the curriculum contribute well to pupils' development and their enjoyment of school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thus raise standards, by:
 - sharing the stronger teaching practice seen in some subjects more widely across the school
 - ensuring that teachers are consistent in following the school's policies on assessment and managing behaviour
 - ensuring that all teachers have equally high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined, committed hard work and resilience of the principal and the senior team have improved the school. Governors and the Ormiston Academy Trust provide appropriate levels of support and challenge. Consequently, improvements are sustainable and there is the capacity to make this a securely good school.
- Pupils speak highly of the principal. One older pupil told inspectors, 'Our principal really cares about us.' This view was echoed by many pupils. Staff spoken to by inspectors are unfailingly positive about the improvements made by the principal. She leads by example and inspires staff.
- Leaders, including those from Ormiston Academies Trust and governors, are knowledgeable about the school, including its strengths and areas that require further development. They have established solid foundations upon which to build further improvements. This has taken place despite challenges with staff recruitment and finances.
- Leaders' focus is on classroom-based school improvement. They know that once teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good, pupils will make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders provide an extensive range of staff development opportunities to improve teaching. Their evaluation of these programmes is not, however, sharply focused on checking that teachers implement the training received. In some subjects, improvements in teaching are too slow.
- The quality of middle leadership has improved since the last inspection. Subject and pastoral leaders feel empowered as experts in their field and share the principal's ambitions. Middle leaders' views are respected and acted upon. They feel accountability systems are robust and challenging. Middle leaders accept pupils' views that there needs to be more consistently good teaching.
- Leaders make sure that the range of subjects pupils experience is broad and relevant to them. The curriculum has been revised based on analyses of pupils' interests and an understanding of the local area. Pupils choose from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. They can, for example, gain qualifications in children's play, learning and development, catering and hospitality, and Latin. Pupils appreciate the wider range of subjects that better meets their needs.
- While the numbers taking the EBacc suite of qualifications are low, leaders are committed to improving uptake. Historically, the school has faced difficulties in recruiting teachers of modern foreign languages.
- Extra-curricular activities include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, street dance, Young Enterprise, various sports and performing arts. Leaders shared many examples of where individual students have been guided towards a particular extra-curricular activity in order to promote their learning and self-esteem.
- The programme for the personal, social and health education of pupils is well coordinated. Pupils take part in activities that enable them to understand what it means to live in modern Britain. These include elections, helping others through charity work and developing respect for others of different faiths, cultures and beliefs. Pupils

have studied 'inspirational people' in religious education and discussed how they might emulate them.

- The Year 7 catch-up premium is used increasingly well to help identified pupils make up any lost ground in their literacy and numeracy skills. A reading culture is less well established across subjects.
- The specially resourced provision unit, as well as the wider provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well managed. This is beginning to improve pupils' progress.
- The school receives substantial additional funding to promote the education of disadvantaged pupils. To date, this money has not been spent effectively. Disadvantaged pupils' progress, while improving, has been weak over time. The information about leaders' spending of funding currently on the school website does not show a clear audit trail of the impact of this expenditure. In discussions with inspectors, leaders were clearer about their strategy.
- Newly appointed teachers and those new to the profession enjoy working at the school and feel supported. They comment positively on the training opportunities they receive and how their skills are being refined and improved. These teachers were very knowledgeable about potential safeguarding issues, including those in the local community. They understood, for example, how protecting students from right-wing extremism linked to the 'Prevent' agenda.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well and understand the wider community. Governors know where progress is being made at the school, and they are acutely aware that further improvement is required.
- Governors receive clear reports from senior and middle leaders and verify this information by visits to school.
- Governors are clear that for the school to achieve consistently good standards leaders must make sure that there is less variability in teaching. There is a commitment to building on the strengths of the best teachers, developing others and 'growing our own' through recruiting new staff with strong potential.
- The chair of governors is committed to ensuring that staff are comfortable with the direction in which the school is moving, as well as the pace of change.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. The approaches taken by leaders and staff to keep pupils safe and to support them when they may be at risk of harm are diligent.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the risks they need to identify and the systems they need to follow.
- Close working with outside agencies and prompt referral systems ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met effectively.

- Governors have a good overview of safeguarding. They go well beyond their statutory role and work with leaders to ensure the safety of pupils in the school.
- In discussions with inspectors, pupils of all ages confirmed that they feel safe and secure in school. Every member of staff who completed the Ofsted survey felt that this is a safe school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school to be good. While older pupils are united in their view that teaching is improving, inconsistencies remain between subjects and between teachers in some departments. One reason for this variability is that teachers do not always do what leaders expect of them in terms of the systems used in the classroom. Moreover, some teachers fail to learn from the stronger practice seen in the school.
- This inconsistency in teaching was confirmed by observations of the quality of teaching across the school, scrutiny of work in books and the views of pupils themselves. It was also noted in leaders' self-evaluation.
- The best teaching is characterised by teachers who are ambitious for pupils. Inspectors saw pupils thrive because of excellent relationships with their teachers. Pupils were motivated by challenging tasks that met their individual needs. Stronger teaching was evident in English, vocational subjects, performing arts, physical education and design and technology.
- Where teachers have a sound knowledge of pupils' abilities, they develop pupils' understanding through targeted questioning. They give time for pupils to think and deepen their understanding. In English, teachers' good subject knowledge and probing questioning enable pupils to analyse text accurately. As a result, pupils are engaged and motivated in their learning.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils, including the most able. Too often, teachers accept superficial answers from pupils. At times they give pupils work which occupies them, as opposed to stretching and engaging them. Teachers do not always expect pupils to work hard or complete the tasks provided.
- Pupils who need extra support with their learning are not always given it. In some lessons, these pupils will leave tasks unfinished or struggle to get started. Disengagement and low-level disruption then follow, which interfere with the learning of others.
- It is notable that in English pupils are well supported to expand their vocabulary and develop reading. This is not, however, consistently done in other subjects.
- Homework is not set regularly by all departments for all year groups. There is great variation in the amount that pupils receive. Therefore, pupils miss opportunities to consolidate their learning or prepare for work to come. Leaders have not yet established an effective system to track missed homework.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They made inspectors feel very welcome. They were happy to talk about their school and to show inspectors the work they were doing in class. Pupils hold doors open for adults and peers and there is a friendly atmosphere around the school.
- Pupils show respect for others' views and ideas. The school is inclusive, and observations of pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes saw the majority working and socialising together well.
- In some lessons, a small minority of pupils' attitudes to learning were glib and, at times, disruptive. These negative approaches slowed the progress of learning. Equally, less-than-positive approaches to learning were seen in a minority of books, where work was missing, incomplete and poorly presented.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They have a clear understanding of issues surrounding e-safety, knife crime, radicalisation, gang culture and child exploitation.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop leadership qualities and skills. They can, for example, become members of the school council. There are also opportunities to join a sports council or an arts council. Pupils who had become school librarians were very proud of this and keen to explain to inspectors the work they did.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provision which meets their needs and interests more effectively. There are regular checks to ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning programmes and that they attend regularly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school when moving between lessons and at social times is generally calm and orderly.
- Pupils are positive about changes at the school which have resulted in good behaviour. This view is supported by the fact that number of exclusions has dropped markedly and is becoming more in line with the national average.
- Pupils respond promptly to instructions. They demonstrate pride in their school by wearing their uniforms correctly and keeping the school site tidy.
- Information shared by leaders shows marked improvements in pupils' perception of the school. In April 2016, for example, a third of pupils felt that staff did not support the victims of bullying. This fell to 9% in a November 2018 survey. Pupils spoken to by inspectors said bullying was rare and dealt with appropriately if it happened.
- Leaders continue to improve the attendance and reduce the persistent absence of all pupils through a range of strategies. The number of days pupils do not come to school

is reducing. Despite these improvements in attendance, however, pupils still miss more school than others nationally. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils join the school with attainment below that typical for their age. Although improving, outcomes for pupils who left Year 11 in 2017 and 2018 were not good enough. Disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and the most able pupils made particularly slow progress. The standards pupils are reaching currently are rising because of better teaching, but more remains to be done.
- While it is improving, pupils' final levels of attainment remain below those of pupils in other schools. The proportion achieving strong and standard passes in English and mathematics is below national averages and the number achieving the EBacc suite of qualifications is also below that of other schools. Conversely, in 2018 pupils made above-average progress in the open option of subjects which they chose to study at GCSE.
- Information supplied by leaders, matched with work seen in lessons and in pupils' books shows some stronger gains in learning in key stage 3. This is because work is better matched to pupils' needs.
- The progress of current pupils at key stage 4 is less secure. Year 11 boys, for example, are currently making only marginally more progress than boys in 2018. These pupils still have a legacy of poor teaching. Leaders are aware of this and a raft of intervention strategies are in place to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils require at this stage of their learning. Girls' progress at key stage 4 is stronger than that of the boys.
- Across the school, the most able pupils do not achieve well enough. Too many do not develop the wide knowledge and deep understanding needed to attain higher standards. Teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are sometimes too low.
- Pupils' standards of literacy when they begin secondary education are lower than those of pupils in other schools. Poor punctuation, spelling and grammar prevent pupils from expressing themselves as well as they should. This is undermining their standards across a range of subjects.
- Pupils with SEND are beginning to make better progress in key stages 3 and 4 than in previous years. This is due to the improving support and closer monitoring they receive.
- There is a comprehensive careers programme, with independent advice and guidance given in all years. Pupils told inspectors they value how this enables them to make informed choices about their future career pathways. Consequently, despite the challenges pupils face because of their underachievement, the numbers moving on to sustained destinations are in line with the national average. At the time of the inspection, all pupils who left Year 11 in 2018 are in education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	139918
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10058485

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	970
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Crowe
Principal	Ms Leigh Moore
Telephone number	0121 506 4300
Website	www.woacademy.co.uk
Email address	leigh.moore@woacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 October 2016

Information about this school

- Wodensborough Ormiston Academy is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school is part of The Ormiston Academies Trust.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is above the national average.
- The number of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds
- The school works with Impact, YEST and Whiteheath pupil referral unit for a small number of pupils who receive alternative provision at key stages 3 and 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe teaching and learning across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by senior leaders for some of these visits.
- Inspectors reviewed what pupils had learned over time through looking at their books in lessons and talking to them.
- Inspectors met with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes to talk about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors listened to Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, the chair and vice-chair of governors and a regional director for Ormiston Academy Trust. During these meetings inspectors discussed the school's effectiveness and the impact of leaders' work.
- Meetings were also held with middle leaders and teachers new to the profession.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, safeguarding records and procedures, behaviour records and attendance information.
- Inspectors considered the views of three written responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and 39 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Nigel Griffiths, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Reeves	Ofsted Inspector
Herminder Channa	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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