

Ormskirk School

Wigan Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 2AT

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have been too slow to bring about improvement.
- Over this period, leaders and teachers have not been held to account effectively for the progress and welfare of the pupils in their care.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make the progress that they should.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Pupils do not have enough time to reflect on their work and make improvements.
- Teachers do not consistently support pupils to develop accuracy and fluency in their writing.
- When teaching is not effective, teachers do not plan for learning that meets pupils' needs and eliminate gaps in pupils' knowledge, including in the sixth form.
- Pupils' work is sometimes of poor quality; it is untidy, often unfinished and sometimes tasks are missing, particularly for boys.
- Occasionally, bullying is not dealt with effectively by staff.
- Teachers have not used school policies effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour has declined since the previous inspection. A minority of pupils behave inappropriately in social areas and corridors.
- When teachers' expectations are too low, activities fail to capture pupils' interest. Pupils stop working and disrupt learning. This is not challenged consistently by teachers.
- The proportion of pupils who have been excluded for a fixed period is higher than the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Over time, in the sixth form, leaders' actions have not had enough impact on improving teaching and outcomes for academic courses.

The school has the following strengths

- The recent appointment of a new headteacher has already started to have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Careers information and guidance are effective in supporting pupils for their next stage.
- The curriculum includes a broad range of subjects.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, including governance, by ensuring that leaders:
 - speed up and embed the very recent improvements to the school so that its long-standing weaker aspects are quickly and fully addressed
 - use effective accountability structures so that leaders and teachers are held to account for the progress and welfare of pupils in their care
 - use pupil premium funding effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve pupils' progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, by ensuring that teachers:
 - cater effectively for pupils' individual needs, so that all groups of pupils make strong progress
 - have consistently high expectations of pupils
 - systematically develop the technical accuracy and fluency of pupils' writing
 - challenge pupils to produce written work that is complete and of the highest possible standard.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, by ensuring that:
 - teachers follow the expectations in the behaviour policy to challenge pupils whose behaviour is not of a high standard
 - effective strategies are put in place to reduce the proportion of pupils regularly absent from school, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
 - appropriate support is provided for pupils who cannot self-regulate their behaviour, so that the proportion of pupils excluded from school for a fixed period reduces
 - incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Improve teaching and learning in the sixth form so that students make stronger progress on academic courses.

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

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have not been effective in bringing about improvement. The weaknesses in the school's work identified in the previous inspection have not been properly addressed. In addition, the school's approaches have led to pupils' behaviour declining.
- The lack of effective leadership since the previous inspection does not give full assurance that the very recent improvements to the school will be sustained and embedded.
- There has been turbulence in leadership and management in the last few years. Shortly before the last inspection, the headteacher of many years retired. The new headteacher stayed in post for only a little over two years and temporary leadership was put in place until the current headteacher was appointed at Easter 2019.
- The improvement plan that leaders produced at the time of the last inspection showed promise but failed to bring about improvement. Lack of strong leadership, together with a lack of clear lines of accountability, left middle leaders and teachers floundering and unsure of the leaders' expectations. The inconsistencies seen in leadership at the last inspection were not addressed effectively. Progress towards improvement stalled.
- The current headteacher has been in post since Easter 2019 and, after only 20 days, is already having a positive impact on the school. Leaders are already starting to come to grips with some of the areas that need strengthening. Attendance and punctuality are showing signs of improvement, although these are fragile. Pupils now wear their uniform with pride and told inspectors that there are more teachers on duty so that pupils are better behaved. Teachers, pupils, and parents and carers have all been very positive about the changes in the school. However, it is too soon to see any sustained improvement.
- The school curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils benefit from a wide range of subjects to choose from in key stage 4. Pupils receive individual, high-quality advice and support to help them to choose appropriate subjects to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a good understanding of the particular needs of pupils with SEND. Despite this, teachers do not always provide appropriate support to help pupils with SEND overcome their barriers to learning. Consequently, progress for pupils with SEND has not improved since the last inspection. Further, when compared with other pupils, larger proportions of pupils with SEND are regularly absent from school and excluded for a fixed period.
- Literacy is not developed consistently across the curriculum. Pupils' work demonstrates that they can write with fluency and accuracy. However, their literacy skills demonstrated in some subjects are not transferred across the curriculum as teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' work.
- Pupils' personal development is supported in weekly 'skills for life' sessions. These sessions cover all aspects of British values to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. These sessions also form a central part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

(SMSC) development. Leaders enrich pupils' learning experience through a range of extra-curricular trips and activities. However, despite the quality of the planned curriculum in this area, there are pupils that do not make the link between British values and their behaviour in school.

- Leaders have not used pupil premium funding effectively to bring about improvement for disadvantaged pupils. Progress for disadvantaged pupils has not improved since the last inspection. Attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have steadily declined since the last inspection and the incidence of exclusion of these pupils has increased.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not ensured that the school has improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. They were not able to secure the actions needed for the school to resolve the weaknesses found at the previous inspection.
- Governors bring a range of skills to their role. They are knowledgeable, particularly about education. Governors have used this knowledge to ask challenging questions of leaders. However, despite having asked these questions, governors were not effective in holding the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for the lack of improvement since the last inspection.
- Governors have also not ensured that additional funding available to support disadvantaged pupils has brought about improvements in their progress, behaviour and attendance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All appropriate checks are made to ensure that only those that are safe to work with pupils are employed by the school. Leaders have made links with a number of external agencies to ensure that, when needed, appropriate support for pupils and their families is put in place promptly.
- All staff receive training about safeguarding annually, and updates are provided throughout the year, as necessary. Consequently, staff recognise the signs of abuse and respond appropriately. Pupils told inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe online and that there is somebody that they can talk to if they need help. Pupils said that they feel safe in school.
- Leaders work cooperatively with alternative providers to ensure that all safeguarding checks are in place and that pupils attend regularly. Attendance is closely monitored, and absence followed up promptly in line with the school's policy. Frequent visits by leaders to alternative providers support pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching has been the main whole-school focus for improvement since the last inspection. Despite this, the lack of appropriate lines of accountability left middle leaders and teachers confused about their responsibilities and unsure of senior leaders'

expectations for new teaching strategies. As a result, there has been little improvement in teaching across the school. The variability that was seen at the last inspection continues.

- Leaders have used quality assurance systems to monitor teaching and learning across the curriculum. As a result, leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, this understanding has not led to improvements in the consistency of teaching across the school.
- Whole-school training has also been delivered to help teachers to improve their challenge to pupils and how pupils engage with their learning. There are signs that this is beginning to have some impact at key stage 3. However, this has not led to any significant improvement to the overall consistency of teaching and learning in the school.
- There are some strengths in teaching. For example, English, modern foreign languages and many of the vocational subjects are strong. In these subjects, teachers model new learning and use questioning effectively to help pupils to deepen their understanding. Pupils are interested in their learning and are keen to improve their work.
- When teaching is effective, teachers have high expectations. Pupils, including the most able pupils, make strong gains in their learning. However, sometimes teachers do not provide pupils with appropriate challenge. Teachers do not use questioning effectively to tease out pupils' understanding.
- Some teachers do not plan learning to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. When this is the case, teaching revolves around completing tasks rather than developing learning. Consequently, learning is superficial, and some pupils do not perform as well as they should.
- Not all teachers engage pupils in their learning. Pupils move off task and low-level disruption often occurs as a result. This poor behaviour inhibits learning for the pupils involved and for other pupils in the classroom.
- Teachers do not consistently develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. Pupils are not supported effectively to develop their technical skills, and their writing lacks fluency. Weaknesses in this area have an impact across the curriculum, particularly in geography and history.
- The school's feedback policy is not applied consistently across departments. When teachers do follow the policy, pupils typically improve their work in response to constructive advice. However, where this does not happen, gaps in pupils' learning are not addressed and this inhibits future learning.

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, parents and staff say that bullying happens in school, but teachers usually deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils said that there is always somebody to talk to if

they have a problem and that they feel safe in school. However, some pupils feel that bullying is not always dealt with effectively and that it carries on despite the intervention of teachers. When this is the case, pupils sometimes stop reporting it to teachers; they say that they just 'get used to it'.

- Pupils' personal development is promoted through 'skills for life' sessions, which are delivered to the whole school in a weekly session. This part of the curriculum has been carefully developed to cover all aspects of pupils' personal, social and health (PSH) education.
- Despite the quality of the planned curriculum, the inconsistencies in teaching lead to varied experiences for pupils during these weekly sessions. Where teaching is not as strong, pupils' behaviour deteriorates, and they do not engage appropriately in the discussions that take place. As a result, pupils do not benefit fully from the planned curriculum.
- The curriculum provides pupils with advice on how to manage personal risk and helps pupils to understand how to be respectful and considerate of others. Pupils are very clear on the dangers of online social media sites and how to ensure they stay safe when using them.
- British values are also promoted through the 'skills for life' sessions. Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law. They see this in action through the workings of the school council. Pupils can talk about the rights of the individual regardless of their differences. They talked to inspectors about how racial differences, disabilities and sexual orientation could lead to prejudicial behaviour, but felt that it would not happen in their school.
- Leaders develop pupils' SMSC understanding through form time and the wider PSH education curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, including environmental and charity work. Recently, pupils raised money to provide goats for African communities, and there is a 'Shine' group that holds coffee mornings to support mental health charities and raise awareness of mental health issues.
- Pupils benefit from a structured careers programme that is also delivered through 'skills for life' sessions and a number of careers events. Leaders are working towards the government's benchmarks for high-quality careers education. From an early age, pupils develop an awareness of the range of opportunities available to them when they leave school.
- Pupils' work over time and across a range of subjects shows that not all pupils take pride in their work. Some pupils do not demonstrate strong attitudes to learning. Work is often untidy and disorganised. Some work is incomplete or missing. As a result, some pupils, particularly boys, do not practise what it means to be an effective learner.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Since the last inspection, school behaviour policies have not been enforced consistently across the school. Rewards and sanctions have not been used effectively to improve pupils' behaviour. Pupils and teachers told inspectors that sometimes poor behaviour

went completely unchallenged. This has led to a general deterioration of pupils' behaviour since the last inspection.

- The proportion of pupils that are temporarily excluded from school has increased steadily since the last inspection as a result of the deterioration in behaviour. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. There are signs that this is beginning to improve, as far fewer pupils have been excluded during the last term. However, it is too soon to determine whether this improvement will be sustained.
- Pupils' attendance has declined since the last inspection. Overall attendance is only slightly below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils that are regularly absent from school is higher than the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. There is some evidence that attendance is beginning to improve but, as with exclusions, this improvement is tentative, and it is too soon to demonstrate that this improvement will be sustained.
- Since the arrival of the new headteacher, behaviour policies are being put into practice more effectively by staff. Parents, pupils and staff feel that behaviour has improved considerably in the short time since the arrival of the new headteacher.
- Although pupils are lively, they behave well around the corridors and in social areas. They move promptly to their classrooms at lesson changeover times. Pupils said that this is because more teachers are now on duty and pupils' behaviour is more closely monitored.
- Leaders use alternative provision effectively to support pupils' learning. Leaders oversee the personal development, behaviour and safety of pupils in alternative provision. They visit regularly to ensure that the activities and learning that are provided by the alternative provision meet pupils' needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in the published data for GCSE examinations has been strong for the last three years. The proportion of pupils who have attained both English and mathematics at a standard pass or strong pass has been above the national average for the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects is above the national average. The proportion of pupils that attain a GCSE in all subjects in the EBacc suite of subjects at a standard pass or strong pass has been at least in line with the national average for the last three years.
- However, pupils' progress in GCSE examinations has not been as strong. Despite the published measure of overall progress being in line with the national average, there are considerable fluctuations across groups of pupils. In particular, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is well below that of other pupils nationally, and pupils with SEND make progress that is considerably lower than that of all pupils nationally.
- There are also fluctuations across subject areas. Pupils make strong progress in some subjects, such as languages, design technology and performing arts. However, progress in mathematics, history and geography has been below the national average for some time and shows little sign of improvement.

- In Years 10 and 11, pupils' work over time demonstrates that pupils are still not making as much progress as they should. The variations for different groups of pupils and across subjects continue for pupils in key stage 4. Similarly, the differences between the progress of both disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND and others are not closing rapidly.
- At key stage 3, leaders' information shows that pupils are making better progress and that the differences for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are starting to close. However, pupils' work does not demonstrate the positive picture seen in leaders' information. There continues to be considerable variation in the quality of work and in pupils' progress across and within a range of subjects. For example, in geography and mathematics, the quality of pupils' work was different in different classes.
- Appropriate careers advice, together with the high proportion of pupils that gain standard or better passes in their GCSEs in both English and mathematics, ensure that they move on to high-quality destinations.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- At the time of the last inspection, inconsistencies in teaching and learning in the sixth form were leading to variations in progress across a range of subjects, particularly for A-level subjects. Leaders have monitored the quality of teaching and learning, but this has not led to improvement across all subjects. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form remains variable across subject areas.
- In the sixth form, just as in the other key stages, teaching is sometimes focused on tasks rather than learning. As a result, students' knowledge is sometimes superficial; they are unable to recall knowledge and apply it to new tasks. This is particularly true in mathematics, chemistry and history, where students' progress has been below average for a number of years. Although there has been some improvement for current students, their work in these subjects shows that students continue to make less progress than they should.
- Leaders' expectations are that students' overall progress this year will be slightly higher than in 2018. Despite leaders' high expectations, current students do not make consistently good progress across their A-level subjects.
- Progress in applied courses is much stronger. Students consistently make good progress in these subjects because of the good teaching that they receive. Despite this, there are very few applied courses on offer to students as they move into the sixth form.
- There are some strengths in the leadership of the sixth form. Leaders have high expectations of students. Students are encouraged to aim high and are supported well in their applications for the next stage of their career. Pastoral provision is strong and there is a variety of extra-curricular activities for students to become engaged in.
- However, leaders are aware that the sixth-form study programme does not cater for the needs and interests of many of their students. The SENCo has recently started to work with the head of sixth form to ensure that appropriate and relevant courses are put in place to provide pathways for students with SEND. Leaders plan to introduce a wider range of applied courses to provide a more appropriate balance between A-level

and applied courses.

- Good provision is made to develop students' PSH education. Students benefit from learning about healthy sexual relationships and the dangers from the misuse of drugs. These are delivered through the regular 'skills for life' sessions. However, students feel that they would benefit from more support in some practical areas, such as preparation for living away from home.
- There is an enrichment programme for sixth-form students. There are opportunities for charity work, particularly within the local community. Many students are involved in a school mentoring programme. Students said that they really value the opportunity to support younger pupils in the school. They felt that the mentoring programme benefited themselves as much as the younger pupils involved.
- Learners without sufficiently strong GCSE qualifications in English or mathematics are well supported. Students that re-sit these subjects in the sixth form make good progress. Most students are successful in improving their grade.
- There is an effective programme of careers advice and guidance. Students receive independent careers advice as well as opportunities to talk to employers and further education providers. There are visits to universities and apprenticeship fairs. As a result, students are able to make appropriate decisions about their future career path.
- Destinations for students after sixth form help them to make progress towards their chosen career. The vast majority move on to university or higher apprenticeships, although some choose to move into employment.
- Students enjoy good relationships with their teachers. They told inspectors that their teachers go 'above and beyond' to help them to get the best out of their time in the sixth form. They know that they could talk to their teachers about issues if they needed to.
- Sixth-form students enjoy their learning. This is evidenced by retention rates that are well above the national average and high levels of attendance. However, students are not always punctual to their lessons. The systems for monitoring students' punctuality are not effective.

School details

Unique reference number	132834
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10087854

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,405
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Slawinski
Headteacher	Martin Witter
Telephone number	01695 583040
Website	www.ormskirk.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	manager@ormskirk.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 February 2017

Information about this school

- Ormskirk School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- In key stage 4, a small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the Training

and Learning Centre, West Lancashire Community High School and BDS Training (Skelmersdale).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of subjects, including by conducting joint observations with school leaders.
- Inspectors, alongside school leaders, formally scrutinised pupils' work from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 across a range of subjects. They also looked at pupils' work when observing teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors spoke with a group of curriculum leaders, teachers and a group of non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors also met formally with groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 and students in the sixth form. Inspectors also spoke with pupils informally during social times.
- An inspector spoke with a group of six governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including school policies, safeguarding procedures, leaders' self-evaluation and leaders' school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the 420 responses to the pupil survey, the 128 responses to the online staff questionnaire, the 142 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 136 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

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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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