

Inspection of Wodensborough Ormiston Academy

Hydes Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0DR

Inspection dates: 24 June, and 7 and 8 July 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Wodensborough Ormiston Academy has taken great strides forward in the last three years. Work is challenging, and pupils are now learning well across a wide range of subjects. Much of this is down to the principal's inspirational leadership, and the teamwork that extends throughout the school. All the staff want to do the best for every one of the pupils. Pupils learn to respect each other's cultures and traditions, and the school is quick to act on any bullying. Pupils recognise the improvements in the school, and say that they feel safe.

Leaders have very high expectations for pupils' learning and their conduct. Just occasionally, staff do not quite uphold them. Pupils behave well in lessons, and do not disrupt learning for others. They wear their uniforms smartly.

Leaders' response to the pandemic has been exceptional. From the outset, they were determined that those activities which could continue as normal, such as curriculum planning, should do so. They established effective remote learning, and they ensured that pupils had the facilities they needed to learn. They planned pupils' return to school imaginatively, recognising especially the need to support their mental health. Pupils' attendance has quickly picked up, and has almost returned to normal levels.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have radically improved the structure of the curriculum. Major improvements in the teaching of modern and ancient languages have meant that more pupils want to study a language at key stage 4. Pupils now have the opportunity to study for GCSEs in the three separate sciences. These changes enable the most able pupils to gain qualifications that give them the best opportunity to meet their aspirations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a broad range of subjects. The sixth form serves its students well. Since it opened two years ago, no student has chosen to leave.

Subject leaders have planned work so that it takes good account of what pupils can already do. For example, in technology, pupils learn simple techniques before using these in more complex tasks. Teachers build effective links between subjects. Alongside key subject-specific knowledge, pupils learn important skills that contribute to their personal development, such as teamwork, resilience and speaking confidently. Across the school, inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well.

Teachers in the main school and the sixth form have strong subject knowledge, and they explain ideas well. They use specialist vocabulary accurately, and they expect pupils to do the same. Teachers appreciate a good range of relevant training, and they are keen to learn from each other. However, there is a little variation in the skilfulness with which teachers present topics to the class. In addition, expectations

in physical education (PE) could be higher. Leaders design courses that provide sixth-form students with every opportunity to progress on to appropriate next steps in education, training or employment. Post-16 students benefit from learning in the wider community as well as in school.

Pupils with SEND learn well. Those from the resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) are largely taught in classes alongside their peers, and so receive a broad education. The school provides specialist support to pupils who enter the school with low reading ages. However, some weaker readers do not benefit from this as well as they might. Staff plan an overhaul of the book stock in the learning resource centre. COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions have meant that pupils have been unable to borrow from the centre.

Teachers use assessment well to show pupils precisely what they have learned and where there is further work to do. They also use this information to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching, and to make improvements.

Pupils' classroom conduct is consistently good. At social times, instances of aggressive behaviour are rare. The rate of fixed-term exclusion is falling. However, many pupils behave themselves because of the school's rules, rather than through their own sense of responsibility.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the academy. Teaching provides pupils with the social and cultural knowledge that enrich their lives as citizens. Leaders are re-establishing extra-curricular activities, which paused during the pandemic. For example, pupils greatly enjoy contributing to school productions, and a large proportion of Year 9 pupils are working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Senior leaders support and energise the whole school community. Staff say that leaders are appropriately concerned for their well-being. Parents strongly support the school.

The multi-academy trust (MAT) has provided effective support for the school in curriculum development and in financial management. The local governing body (LGB) understands in outline how a good quality of education can contribute to revitalising a community. Governors have worked well with trust officers to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very aware of the varied risks that pupils face, including sexual harassment. They provide a wide-ranging programme that explains these risks well to staff and pupils. Leaders have strong links with other organisations that protect children, and they persist when these agencies fail to respond robustly. During the pandemic, staff did everything they could to keep pupils safe. They took the

initiative in providing pupils and the wider community with guidance and practical support.

Leaders make appropriate checks on those staff who join the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' orderly behaviour is a credit to the school. Nonetheless, for many pupils this is too dependent on the school's system of rewards and sanctions, rather than their own sense of self-respect. Leaders should continue their work to develop pupils' responsibility and understanding of those attitudes that will enable them to make the most of their time in school.
- At times, teachers do not exercise the same good judgement in explanation, selecting materials and pacing activities. To an extent, this reflects the rapid pace at which the curriculum has evolved. Leaders should facilitate teachers' undoubted willingness to sharpen their practice by working out and discussing precisely what works best.
- Those pupils in Years 7 and 8 who receive extra support for their reading make good progress. However, the school should give a greater prominence to literacy and the love of reading. The impact of reading support would be increased if more pupils were included in its scope. When the learning resource centre reopens as a lending library, pupils should have access to a well-organised, attractively presented stock of books.
- Expectations of pupils in PE are currently lower than those in other subjects. During the inspection, a high proportion of pupils did not bring their kit. Leaders are aware of the need to restore effective subject leadership so that pupils learn consistently well in the subject.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139918
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10184505
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1110
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Hudson
Principal	Leigh Moore
Website	www.woacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In September 2019, the school opened a sixth form for students with SEND. The declared aim of the provision is to provide a bridge so that students can better move on to further education, training or employment.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 25 pupils whose primary need is hearing impairment or autism spectrum disorder.
- The school provides full-time alternative provision for nine pupils at Impact Education, Sandwell Community School, Sandwell Valley School, and Albright Education Centre.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began on 24 June 2021 as a monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005. Having found that the school performance

appeared to be improving, the inspection was deemed to be under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. As a section 5 inspection requires more inspector time to complete than a monitoring inspection, inspectors returned on 7 and 8 July 2021 to complete the full inspection.

- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors met with a range of other staff, including newly qualified teachers. I met with the regional director of the MAT and representatives of the LGB.
- When inspecting safeguarding, we looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. We also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of LGB meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- We took account of the 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers. We also considered 61 responses to the survey for staff.
- We focused on English, mathematics, science, modern and ancient languages, history, technology and performing arts. We considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects. I listened to a small number of pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 reading.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
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