

# Inspection of Ormiston Denes Academy

Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4AH

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils have mixed views of school. On the one hand, they enjoy some of their lessons and learning is fun. On the other, they worry that staff will leave and there will be more change. This is because the school has had several headteachers in a short space of time and there has been significant turnover of staff.

Pupils like the new senior leadership team. They feel listened to. They understand why the new school rules are stricter so that pupils' behaviour is better. When bullying occurs, teachers deal promptly with issues. There is still more work for leaders to do to create a consistent culture of mutual respect and kindness. Some staff do not always deal with the unkind comments that some pupils make.

Pupils feel safe. They appreciate the efforts staff make to patrol the local walkways to school.

Pupils are having more opportunities to take the lead with aspects that matter most to them. For instance, promoting environmental awareness through eco club or celebrating diversity through the 'LGBTQ club'. Pupils also take part in a leadership programme run by the multi-academy trust.

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

Leaders are developing a broad and ambitious curriculum so that pupils have wider choices for their future careers. Leaders have invested substantially in expanding the modern foreign languages department. Pupils can now study French, German or Spanish. Pupils will be able to gain the English Baccalaureate. Leaders are also providing greater challenge through the introduction of computing.

The curriculum in a few subjects is in the early stages of development, while in others it is more established. In mathematics, for example, learning is well considered. There is a focus on making sure pupils have the foundations in place to do more complex work later. Pupils regularly have opportunities to recap important learning. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not thought carefully about the key knowledge pupils need to learn and in which order. This means that some pupils find it harder to complete complex tasks and make connections in their learning.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. They have thought carefully about the types of books pupils read in tutor time. This is so they learn more about other cultures and traditions. Pupils who struggle to read benefit from specialist phonics teaching, which is helping them to catch up. Pupils read books that match their abilities. This increases their confidence in reading. Most pupils enjoy reading. They understand the value of reading widely and often.

Some teachers do not check what pupils know and can do well enough. Leaders have not been clear with their expectations of how staff are to accomplish this. Some staff still follow the old assessment policy that is out of date. Where

curriculum planning is more established, leaders have thought carefully about when and how teachers are to check what pupils have learned.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are receiving a better deal than was previously the case. Staff receive ongoing training which helps them to consider what strategies to use in lessons so that all pupils can access the same curriculum. In some lessons, pupils with SEND are learning well. Where they do not learn as well, this is because teachers are not making the necessary reasonable adjustments. In these lessons, pupils with complex behavioural needs progress quickly through warnings and are sent out of lessons. The rate of suspensions is high. Too many pupils are repeatedly going through this process.

Leaders continue to establish a culture which embodies the school's values of aspiration, integrity and respect. It is early days. Sometimes pupils do not display their learning of these values. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is suitably focused on giving pupils the knowledge and skills they need to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling adult lives. Leaders are increasing the religious education pupils receive in key stage 4 as, currently, not enough time is given to the study of this. Pupils benefit from a rich and engaging programme of work-based learning. They receive effective careers guidance. Almost all pupils go on to further study in education, employment or training.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and the local risks they face. They watch carefully for the signs of county lines involvement and peer-on-peer abuse. Staff have forged trusting relationships with pupils, so they feel comfortable reporting concerns to them.

Leaders liaise well with external agencies so that the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe. They also make checks to ensure that staff look after pupils who attend alternative provision.

Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They monitor leaders' actions closely. They talk with and listen to pupils and staff to ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding continues.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few subjects, leaders have not thought carefully about the key knowledge pupils need to learn and in which order. This means that some pupils find it harder to complete complex tasks and make connections in their learning. Leaders should ensure that they clearly design the curriculum in every subject to identify the key concepts and knowledge that pupils should learn. This is so pupils

gain increasing subject knowledge, learn more and undertake more difficult tasks.

- Leaders are not clear in their expectations of how they want teachers to check pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This means that some teachers do not know well enough where pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders need to clarify what they expect teachers to do, ensuring the checks teachers make are used to inform lesson planning and delivery so pupils achieve well.
- The rate of suspensions is too high. Some teachers are not making reasonable adjustments for pupils with complex behavioural needs and are not using the warning system as outlined in the school's behaviour policy. This means that pupils have time out of lessons and are not progressing through the curriculum as well as they might. Leaders need to ensure that staff implement the behaviour policy as intended and staff are well supported to cater for pupils with complex behavioural needs so they thrive.
- Some staff are not promoting the school's values sufficiently or consistently well. Some staff do not consistently uphold the respectful culture that leaders are trying to create. This results in pupils believing there is acceptance of unkind comments. Leaders should ensure that staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils so pupils know clearly what it means to be respectful.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139403
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10229094
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	759
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Hann
<b>Principal</b>	Kate Williams
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ormistonden.es.co.uk">www.ormistonden.es.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The new principal joined the school in September 2021. Several senior leaders are also new to the senior leadership team.
- The school uses one unregistered and two registered providers of alternative provision. A small number of pupils attend these.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the regional director of the trust, members of the local governing body and local authority representatives. Inspectors also spoke to the principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, art, religious education and modern foreign languages to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the provision for PSHE and relationships and sex education and health education. Inspectors reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with pupils and leaders.
- Inspectors met with the leaders in charge of SEND and scrutinised documentation for SEND. Inspectors observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with the regional director of the trust, members of the local governing body, local authority representatives, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- An inspector spoke to leaders of the alternative provisions that the school uses.
- Inspectors considered the 34 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View and the 33 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 45 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 48 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

## **Inspection team**

Liz Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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