

# Inspection of a good school: Cowes Enterprise College, An Ormiston Academy

Crossfield Avenue, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 8HB

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Cowes Enterprise College, An Ormiston Academy continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils benefit a great deal from coming to this school. Leaders' aspirations for them are uncompromising. As a result, pupils gain vital knowledge that prepares them well for a successful future life.

Pupils generally behave well around the school. Their attitudes are mature and their conduct is courteous. They respond positively to well-established routines and expectations. The small proportion who find this difficult are supported well to learn from their mistakes and make better choices in the future.

The school environment is one in which pupils feel safe and can learn. Classrooms are purposeful and the school site is calm. Adults respond swiftly and effectively to reports of bullying or inappropriate behaviour, looking at what can be learned from them as well as what needs to be done in response.

Pupils are prepared well for their future, both academically and personally. A thoughtful and comprehensive personal development programme nurtures their understanding of the world beyond the school and the island that they live on. Pupils describe this learning as timely and helpful. They recognise that adults encourage them to learn about, and be respectful of, other people's uniqueness, and recognise that they are supported with their mental health and well-being.

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

Pupils learn well at Cowes Enterprise College. The curriculum is well considered and academically rigorous. From Year 7 to Year 11, pupils learn successfully across a broad range of subjects. They achieve useful qualifications that equip them well for their next steps. Almost all move on to follow high-quality education, employment and training routes at the end of Year 11. Those choosing to remain in the school post-16 benefit from a similarly academic programme of study as they did in key stages 3 and 4. Over time, an

increasing number of students are moving on to high-quality university courses or degree-level apprenticeships at the end of Year 13.

Leaders give careful thought to the whole curriculum, not just the academic subjects that pupils learn. They strive to expand pupils' horizons way beyond their local community through a rich diet of carefully planned experiences that are captured in the school's enrichment charter. Together, the 'Everyone Matters' programme and religious education curriculum help pupils understand the complexities of the world that they live in. This knowledge places them well to navigate the risks and opportunities they are exposed to as part of everyday life. Careers education, information, advice and guidance is of a high quality. Leaders make effective use of local expertise about apprenticeships, recognising the diversity of opportunity that is available locally.

Despite the strengths evident in the curriculum, leaders and teachers are ambitious to do more for pupils. Their current work to review and further develop planning and teaching is at different points in different subjects. Where improvements have already been put in place, what pupils need to learn has been identified and mapped out precisely across Years 7 to 13. Teachers then use their strong subject knowledge to teach these concepts effectively. In these subjects, pupils are learning extremely well. Some other subjects are at an earlier point on this journey of further improvement.

Since the last inspection, leaders have prioritised developing the school's reading curriculum. Pupils who need extra help to become accurate and fluent readers are identified quickly and supported very well, as an integral part of their wider learning experience. All pupils benefit from work that develops their vocabulary and encourages them to read an increasingly broad range of texts.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well here. They access the same rich curriculum as other pupils, supported by staff who identify and understand their needs well. An ethos of inclusion empowers staff to use teaching strategies that benefit all pupils, not just those with SEND. While a small proportion of parents report concerns about provision for pupils with SEND, most are highly complimentary about the help that their children receive. The school's 'Success Centre' forms an important part of this care, providing a useful space for pupils to learn and reflect in.

Staff value the way that leaders involve them in improving the school while being mindful of their well-being. Leaders invest deliberately in coaching, training and time for staff to make improvements that benefit pupils. Staff are exceptionally positive about working at this school and about the support that they receive. Governors and trust staff provide a useful extra layer of scrutiny to leaders, as well as ensuring that the school's legal duties are met.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' focus on this aspect of the school's work is evident at every turn. At every level, staff are well trained and knowledgeable, giving them the confidence to act if a potential concern arises. Checks on pupils attending alternative provision are carried out routinely, to reassure leaders that pupils are safe when not at school. Pupils are taught to recognise unacceptable behaviour and taught where to go for help if they experience or witness it. Clear routines and processes enable leaders to act with suitable urgency when concerns are raised, guided by knowing the pupils and families well.

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

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

- From the current strong position, leaders are working to improve the curriculum further. Their ambition is not fully realised across the whole curriculum. In some subjects, where building blocks of knowledge are less precisely identified, pupils are not taught as well as they could be. Leaders should ensure that their current work to adapt and refine the curriculum leads to consistently high standards of teaching and learning across all subjects.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

## 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.

## 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>	140845
<b>Local authority</b>	Isle of Wight
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240796
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,236
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Julius Weinberg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Kitley (Principal)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cowesec.org">http://www.cowesec.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	26 and 27 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Cowes Enterprise College, An Ormiston Academy is a non-selective academy for pupils aged 11 to 19. It is owned and run by the Ormiston Academies Trust. There is a local governing body in place, which carries out aspects of governance delegated by the trust.
- The principal was in post at the time of the last inspection. The chair of the trust took up their post in recent months. The chair of governors has been in post since September 2018. The school's special educational coordinator role is being covered temporarily by an assistant headteacher, who has previous experience of this work.
- The school works with three alternative providers to support a small number of pupils with specific additional needs. Two of these providers are registered with and inspected by Ofsted; the third is not required to be.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and of Ormiston Academies Trust. Some of these discussions were carried out via video call.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into English, mathematics, science, physical education and geography. This involved talking to relevant leaders, visiting lessons, talking to teachers and pupils and looking at samples of work.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. Inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks on adults working in the school. They explored safeguarding training and how adults promote a culture of safeguarding in the school. A sample of safeguarding records was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered other relevant evidence, including feedback from pupils and staff via the online questionnaires and discussions during the inspection. They also took account of more than 150 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online survey.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hanna Miller

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipasz

Ofsted Inspector

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