

Inspection of a good school: Ormiston Park Academy

Belhus Park Lane, Aveley, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 4RU

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of attending Ormiston Park Academy. They value being part of a large community of schools through the multi-academy trust, where they can enter competitions and take part in talent contests. Pupils' wider development is catered for well by the school. They benefit from opportunities they would not ordinarily have such as working with local artists and an Olympian.

Pupils appreciate having leadership responsibilities. The mental health champions support younger pupils. This includes helping their peers if they experience bullying. Pupils trust adults to deal with any friendship problems that may arise. They feel safe at school.

Pupils' behaviour at social times is typically calm. However, during lessons, some staff do not follow the behaviour policy well enough to address the disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils. This hampers pupils' learning in certain subjects. In the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision), ASCEND, the turnover of staff has affected pupils' progression through the curriculum.

Pupils' experience of the curriculum differs. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), struggle to learn. In some subjects, teachers do not sufficiently adapt the curriculum and its delivery to meet pupils' needs.

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

Leaders have taken action to stabilise staffing in the specially resourced provision, ASCEND. They are currently implementing these changes. Trust leaders are also providing more intensive support. This is so that necessary changes in curriculum design and delivery are brought about quickly.

Some subject leaders are further along than others with reviewing and refining their curriculums. Where this works well, leaders have identified the essential building blocks of knowledge that pupils need to learn. They make sure that teachers take account of pupils' starting points. Teachers revisit prior learning to help pupils embed key concepts. Where curriculums work less well, leaders are currently changing the curriculum design. For example, the policy of entering all pupils for triple science, while ambitious, was not achievable for some. The two-year key stage 3 for mathematics is not preparing pupils adequately to start GCSE mathematics in Year 9. There is not enough consideration in the key stage 3 mathematics curriculum of pupils' prior learning in primary school. There are limited opportunities for younger pupils to reason and solve word problems.

Staff support pupils who are learning to read effectively. Pupils follow a structured phonics programme. Staff are appropriately trained. Pupils that can read and are developing their fluency and comprehension receive regular one-to-one support. This is having an impact. Pupils' confidence in discussing texts is increasing. Pupils value reading for pleasure. Pupils who struggle with mathematics do not have access to a catch-up programme.

Teachers are getting to grips with supporting pupils with SEND. Some teachers use pupils' information in support plans effectively to make sure they learn well in lessons. However, others do not. Leaders are delivering training to improve staff's understanding of pupils' needs and how to adapt the curriculum. Some staff find it difficult to manage the behaviour of pupils who have more complex needs.

In many lessons around school, pupils demonstrate positive and respectful behaviours. At times, some pupils' behaviour falls short of the high expectations that leaders have. Although rates of exclusions and suspensions are reducing, they are too high. Some staff, pupils and parents have concerns about the negative impact such behaviour has on teaching and learning.

Leaders prioritise the wider development of pupils. Pupils are proud of the fact that they have won an award for their social action. They contribute in many ways to their local community, from fundraising for local charities to donating to food banks. They understand what it means to grow up in a modern Britain, valuing diversity and democracy. Many volunteer to represent their peers through 'Park Life', the council for student voice. Pupils are also provided with useful careers information to prepare for their next stages of education, employment or training.

Staff are appreciative of the steps leaders have taken to manage their workload, such as introducing an email policy to limit communication outside working hours.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know the risks that pupils face, including when online and when they are in the local community. Leaders act swiftly to manage any concerns that arise. They work effectively with other

agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Leaders know that they need to continue to work hard to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are not subject to suspension or exclusion. The trust supports leaders in managing safeguarding concerns about staff.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils know about the risks of knife crime, gangs and county lines drug transportation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils are following curriculums that build on pupils' prior learning and provide a thorough foundation for future learning. This means that pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Leaders should continue to strengthen curriculums and their delivery, including in mathematics, so that pupils successfully build on what they know and can do.
- Some pupils do not behave as well as they should, as some staff do not use pupils' support plans or the behaviour policy as intended. This disrupts the learning of other pupils. Leaders should ensure that staff have the same high expectations of all pupils and that they consistently use pupils' support plans and the behaviour policy as intended.

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 April 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

Unique reference number	135960
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10255159
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	710
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
Principal	Mark Roessler
Website	www.ormistonpark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 to 21 April 2017

Information about this school

- The principal joined the school in September 2020.
- The school changed its registration in November 2019. It no longer has a sixth form.
- The school has a specially resourced provision called 'ASCEND'. The provision supports up to 30 pupils who have education, health and care plans relating to their social, emotional and mental health needs. Currently, the length of the school day for the specially resourced provision is shorter than that of the main school.
- The school uses four providers of alternative provision, one of which is registered.

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.
- The inspectors spoke with the director for secondary education and the regional director for the trust, the chair of the local governing body, members of the local governing body, the principal, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the head of ASCEND, staff and pupils about the school's provision.

- The lead inspector spoke with a few parents at their request. She also spoke with the providers for alternative provision.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a selection of pupils reading to adults.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour and bullying. In addition, they reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with governors, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also reviewed responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Suzanne Thrower

Ofsted Inspector

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