

Inspection of Ortu Hassenbrook Academy

Hassenbrook Road, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 0NS

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Sally Feeney. This school is part of the Ortu Federation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Kevin Sadler, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Georgina Clark.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy attending Ortu Hassenbrook Academy. They take part in a broad range of trips, visits, and clubs, including annual musical theatre productions and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. These activities develop pupils' confidence and widen their range of experiences and interests.

Pupils can develop their leadership skills through an active school council. Year 11 pupils take part in a mock interview day as part of the school's well-planned careers programme. This helps to prepare pupils for the next stages in their education and employment.

Most pupils behave well, both in and out of lessons. Bullying sometimes happens and, when it does, teachers make it stop. Overall, pupils treat each other and staff with respect. Nevertheless, pupils are frustrated that some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know about the importance of consent and the dangers of drink-driving.

Most lessons develop pupils' knowledge well. However, some lessons are not adapted well enough to meet all pupils' needs, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils often do not achieve as well as they should.

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

The curriculum identifies the important knowledge pupils need to achieve well. This is broken down so that learning builds upon what pupils already know. Teachers regularly build in opportunities in lessons, particularly at the start, to revisit pupils' knowledge from previous lessons. This helps most pupils to know and remember more.

While the curriculum is increasingly well thought through, the quality of teaching in the classroom varies considerably. Many teachers think carefully about what pupils need to know and check how well pupils are learning. Some teachers deliver lessons that match pupils' needs. This deepens their understanding and thinking. However, there are times when pupils are not fully engaged in their work because the work is either too easy or too difficult. Where this is the case, pupils become disengaged and do not produce high-quality work.

Where the quality of education is most effective, teachers skilfully adapt their teaching to ensure pupils, including those with SEND, can access the curriculum successfully. However, teachers do not routinely use information about pupils' knowledge to precisely identify what they know and what they do not remember. This means that teachers do not have accurate information to be able to accurately

change their teaching to meet pupils' needs. As a result, some groups of pupils do not make the progress that they should.

Weaker readers are supported by interventions that help pupils become increasingly fluent and accurate in their reading. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to develop literacy across the curriculum and to encourage a love of reading. There are clear plans in place that show what leaders are putting in place.

The school has set out clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. This is to some extent helping to improve behaviour and support pupils to attend more regularly. However, some teachers do not follow the behaviour policy consistently and are too willing to accept pupils not following the rules. Some pupils do not follow instructions quickly enough. As a result, a significant minority of pupils interrupt learning in these lessons.

The school's personal, social and health education curriculum ensures that pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships and how to keep personal information safe. There are close links to the local community, such as during 'grandparents' evening', when senior citizens visit the school, as well as charitable fundraising schemes. Pupils visit local colleges. Some take part in the 'brilliant club' programme to raise their aspirations by learning about studying at university. Older pupils can choose to study for a range of vocational qualifications. These prepare pupils well for university and for employment in the local area.

Governors and trust leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders have made well-considered improvements to the curriculum and pastoral system, with more work underway, especially around reading and provision for pupils with SEND. These changes are beginning to improve both behaviour and the quality of teaching, but they are not fully developed.

Staff, including early career teachers, are provided with training and support to help them implement the important changes. Staff share the view that they are supported with their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the use of information from assessment to identify weaknesses in the curriculum and to adjust its implementation is not sufficiently precise. As a result, some teachers do not build on what pupils already know, and they do not adapt their teaching accordingly to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that staff understand how to use assessment data precisely

to adjust their plans and activities to ensure they revisit knowledge that pupils have not been taught or do not remember.

- Plans for pupils with SEND are not routinely used effectively by staff. Staff do not adapt their lessons well around the needs of pupils. When this happens, pupils are unable to access the curriculum effectively. As a result, they do not always make the progress that they should. The school should ensure that staff have the training and monitoring to adapt lessons effectively around the needs of pupils.
- Teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently well or with high enough expectations of how pupils should behave. Consequently, some pupils disrupt the learning of others. The school should ensure that staff are trained and monitored to implement the agreed behaviour policy consistently and effectively.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143424
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10255124
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	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Georgina Clark
Principal	Sally Feeney
Website	www.ortu.org
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2019

Information about this school

- The principal has been in post as interim principal since September 2021 and as permanent principal since November 2021.
- The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, computing, history, and music. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the reading coordinator and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the interim CEO of the trust, as well as members of the local governing body.
- An inspector met with early career teachers and staff involved in their induction.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- An inspector spoke with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 50 responses and 41 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 79 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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