

Inspection of a good school: Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy

Lower City Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2HE

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

Outcome

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy continues to be a good school.

The interim principal of the school is Adrian Price. This school is part of the Ormiston Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tom Rees, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinberg.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy (OSCA) staff and pupils share the same high ambitions. Pupils understand and follow the 'Team OSCA' values of 'opportunity, scholarship, compassion, aspiration'. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive. Pupils are happy and safe. Typical parental comments include: 'changes that have been made over the last few months have shown how great OSCA is'.

Most pupils show respectful and positive behaviours during structured lesson times. However, pupils who spoke to inspectors said that poor behaviour still affects some lessons. During unstructured times, such as breaks and lunch, most pupils behave sensibly. Where pupils' behaviour is not acceptable, staff speak with these pupils to explain the school's high expectations. Staff act quickly and efficiently to address any behaviour issues.

OSCA places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Year 11 pupils on the leadership team are proud to support others. Year 10 prefects actively promote a positive environment. These roles help pupils understand how to be responsible. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Pupils take part in a range of clubs such as sports, cooking and 'mech-tech'. Pupils value being able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and school productions.

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

There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection. These include a new interim principal and changes to staff in senior, subject and pastoral leadership roles. The school has developed a highly ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. All pupils,

including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow this curriculum. Leaders' actions to improve the curriculum have led to consistently positive pupil outcomes by the end of key stage 4. The school has secured relevant training to help staff in their roles. As a result, teachers' pedagogy and subject knowledge is a strength.

In some lessons, teachers use assessments precisely. This helps pupils know and remember more. Teachers use 'three-to-start' tasks at the beginning of lessons. These assess what pupils know and help them to learn and remember key knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 7 history can recall from prior knowledge why the Silk Road is important. However, some teachers do not always check what pupils understand in lessons. They do not know if pupils have remembered what they have learned before. This means that some teachers do not consistently adapt the learning to address any wrong ideas or missing knowledge.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND. Teachers use pupils' information effectively to adapt their teaching. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same, ambitious, curriculum. They adapt the curriculum to meet all pupils' needs appropriately. Pupils with SEND successfully access learning and achieve well. Leaders continue to review any curriculum areas where these pupils do not achieve in line with their peers.

The school has not yet fully developed effective strategies to support pupils who are weaker readers. The school identifies pupils who need support. However, leaders are not yet able to diagnose and address weaknesses in pupils' phonics skills, grammar and comprehension. In some classes teachers model reading. They encourage pupils to read during tutor sessions. However, not all pupils read widely and often in school and at home. Leaders continue to encourage and develop pupils' reading. They seek ways to engage all parents in supporting their children to read.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development well. The 'character development' (personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum) is well-planned and sequenced. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, fundamental British values and online safety. A comprehensive careers programme is in place for all pupils. Pupils engage enthusiastically with this programme.

Governors and trustees know their school extremely well. They support and challenge leaders in meetings and in visits to the school. They review and question aspects of the curriculum appropriately. They effectively hold the school to account for safeguarding and the quality of the SEND provision. The school carefully considers staff workload, which staff are appreciative of.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not behave well enough during structured lesson times. This can disrupt the learning of others. The school should continue to raise expectations for pupils' behaviour throughout the school community to ensure that all pupils have a consistently positive experience of their learning.
- Some teachers do not use assessments well enough to check pupils' understanding or identify gaps in their learning. Therefore, pupils' gaps in learning are not addressed and they struggle to build on what they know. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment consistently to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning so pupils can progress well across the curriculum.
- The school has not fully developed effective systems to support pupils who are not confident readers. Also, many pupils do not read widely and regularly in school and at home. Therefore, pupils who need support are not making rapid progress with their phonics, grammar and comprehension and, more widely, pupils are not developing their reading as well as they might. The school should further and rapidly embed the current reading strategy to support all pupils who are not confident readers. It should also monitor and support pupils and parents in engaging with regular and wider reading.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2015.

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	135979
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10269450
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	1,163
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
CEO of the trust	Tom Rees
Principal	Adrian Price (Interim Principal)
Website	www.ormistonsandwell.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ormiston Academies Trust which contains 42 schools.
- A new interim principal was appointed in September 2023.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: English, history, mathematics and performing arts. Inspectors looked at leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons,

looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- 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 observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the trustees, including the education director of the trust, governors, including the chair of the local governing board, the interim principal, senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and pupils. Inspectors also talked informally to pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

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