

Inspection of Ormiston Horizon Academy

Turnhurst Road, Tunstall, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST6 6JZ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The principal of the school is Andrew Fitzgibbon. 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 (CEO), Tom Rees, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinberg.

What is it like to attend this school?

There are high expectations for pupils at Ormiston Horizon Academy. All pupils understand and show the values of respect, resilience and responsibility. Pupils appreciate the positive environment of their school. Teachers treat them as individuals and they welcome this. Pupils spoke to inspectors and talked openly about their positive relationships with staff. Pupils say they can 'be who they want to be' in this inclusive community.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Lessons begin and end in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils know they can report any behaviour issues, which staff deal with rapidly. Bullying is rare. When it occurs, staff take appropriate action to deal with it. Pupils know that inappropriate language is not acceptable and report any incidences swiftly.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Staff support and encourage pupils' well-being and mental health very well. Pupils take part in a range of enrichment activities such as chess, girls' football and cadets. Pupils represent the community on the local authority's Youth Council. Pupil reading leaders support younger pupils in school and in a local primary school. Empowering pupils to support and guide younger pupils and be active citizens in the community is working well.

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

The school has undergone a significant period of development since the last inspection. There are raised expectations around learning and behaviour. However, despite the school working quickly to improve the curriculum, pupils do not yet achieve as well as they should.

The school has developed a curriculum that is equivalent to the national curriculum. Teachers consider what they want pupils to learn in their subjects. Teachers build on increasingly complex subject knowledge over time, where the intended learning is more ambitious. However, some teachers do not take opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding as fully as they might. For example, some do not always ask pupils in-depth questions to promote discussion. This means that pupils are not able to fully develop their understanding of different topics.

Most teachers check what pupils know well and ensure that pupils understand what they have to do. Year 9 pupils in English could explain how Shakespeare's texts discuss power and gender imbalance. They could also link back to their prior learning in Years 7 and 8. However, there are times when teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and struggle to complete their work. This limits the progress they make.

The school quickly and accurately identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers provide pupils with the additional support they need. 'Student passports' set out the support each pupil needs, and teachers use

these effectively to adapt their teaching. Additional adults also support pupils with SEND well in the classroom.

The school identifies pupils who need extra support with their reading quickly. Leaders provide appropriate help to improve pupils' reading skills. This helps pupils become confident and fluent readers. All form groups read age-appropriate texts. Some teachers model reading effectively by highlighting key thematic words. Leaders are considering how pupils can develop more independent reading across the school and at home.

The school understands the importance of attendance. However, the number of pupils absent from school is higher than it should be. Leaders know this and continue to work with families to address this. Attendance remains a key priority for the school and community.

Personal, social, health and economic education is well-planned and sequenced. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, fundamental British values and online safety. Pupils are proud to celebrate individuality and the diverse community in the school and the local area. A detailed careers programme is in place for all pupils. Pupils make effective use of this programme but would welcome more information to help them understand what opportunities are available when they leave.

The trust has invested time and resources to develop the school. Trustees and governors provide challenge and support. This has helped the academy to improve. The school and governors are mindful of staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that teachers consistently check that pupils understand what has been learned and what they can remember. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and so are not always addressed. The school should ensure that teachers are consistently aware of what pupils know and can do and adapt their teaching accordingly to close any gaps.
- Sometimes, opportunities to use more demanding and complex learning activities with pupils are not taken. This means that some learning does not allow pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. The school should ensure that, across the school, different approaches to learning give pupils the opportunities to develop a greater depth of knowledge.

- Too many pupils are absent each day. This means pupils miss too much learning, which limits their progress. The school should further its work with parents and external agencies to secure more regular attendance for all pupils.

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	136680
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10285042
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	1,064
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
Principal	Andrew Fitzgibbon
Website	www.ormistonhorizonacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Ormiston Academies Trust, which contains 42 schools.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers.
- 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

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 focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history and design and technology. Inspectors looked at leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, talked with pupils about their learning and spoke to teachers. 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 and referrals to the local authority; 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 the CEO of the trust, governors, including the chair of the local governing board, senior leaders, teachers, 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, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ellen Walton	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector

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