

Inspection of Ormskirk School

Wigan Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 2AT

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is John Burnham. This school is part of Endeavour Learning 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), David Clayton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Dicker.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to belong to this school. They value the caring ethos and the kind way in which they are treated by staff. Strong relationships underpin the high levels of pastoral care that pupils receive.

The school has high academic expectations of all pupils. It ensures that pupils are prepared well for their next steps after school. Typically, pupils and students in the sixth form are learning well across the curriculum.

There is a calm atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Pupils generally follow the school's rules. They are polite and friendly. In most lessons, pupils learn free from distractions. The school has improved the support that it gives to the very small minority of pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour.

Pupils are keen to help others. For instance, sixth-form students organise donations for a food bank, pupils attend charity fundraising discos, and charity bake sales are very popular. Pupils enjoy whole-school events that bring the school community together, such as sports day and the school production. Some pupils engage well with the range of clubs on offer, such as journalism, coding and guitar clubs, that help them to develop their skills and interests.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. The school's ambition is to increase the number of pupils opting to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. It has successfully promoted modern foreign languages, and the number of pupils opting for these subjects is increasing.

The school has made significant changes to the sixth form. Now, students benefit from a suitable range of subjects with clearly designed curriculums. Furthermore, the quality of education in the sixth form is better than the low published key stage 5 external examinations outcomes in 2023 would suggest. Students are confident to apply new learning. They can fluently articulate their understanding, and their work is of a high quality. As a result of the improvements that the school has made, more students are choosing to stay in the sixth form, and numbers on roll are increasing.

The school has detailed the essential knowledge that it wants pupils to know and remember. Teachers deliver subject content confidently. They choose activities that are well matched to the aims of the curriculum. However, some teachers do not check regularly enough what pupils know and can do. This means that some pupils have misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge that are not corrected.

Pupils know and remember their learning well. In most subjects, pupils' recall of what they have learned before is secure. They can build on what they already know when introduced to new ideas. There is an improving positive trend in pupils' results in external examinations at the end of key stage 4. The 2023 published end of key stage 4 data

shows the negative impact of historic weaknesses in the school. Those pupils did not benefit from the changes that have been made, particularly to the way in which the curriculum is ordered.

The school accurately identifies pupils' additional needs. However, some staff lack confidence to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn as well as they could. In some subjects, adaptations are not consistently used to help these pupils. Some pupils with SEND are not achieving as well as they could.

Effective support is in place for pupils who struggle with reading to help them to catch up with their peers. In tutor times, pupils read well-chosen texts regularly.

The school has employed some successful strategies to improve attendance. For all groups of pupils, attendance has improved and persistent absence has decreased. However, there remain some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who do not attend school frequently. As a result, they have gaps in their learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons and display positive attitudes to their learning.

The school's careers guidance helps pupils to choose appropriate next steps. This helps to ensure that pupils are successful in securing education, employment or training and moving on to ambitious destinations. Pupils' knowledge around healthy relationships, staying safe and different cultures and religions is secure. They enjoy a range of trips and visits to broaden their understanding of the world, such as international trips to New York and Iceland, as well as more local ones to Conwy.

The school and the trust have a clear vision that all pupils, irrespective of social disadvantage, should succeed. This value pervades the school. Trustees and the local academy council challenge the school effectively. They have walked the journey of improvement with the school, ensuring that the school has the right priorities. Staff are positive and proud to work at the school. They appreciate the professional development that is on offer that helps them to hone their craft.

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, teachers do not adapt learning sufficiently well for pupils with SEND. As a result, on occasions, some pupils with SEND are not supported to access the curriculum as effectively as they could. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to be able to make effective adaptations to learning so that pupils with SEND achieve well.

- Some teachers do not check regularly enough what pupils have learned and understood. This can sometimes mean that some pupils have misunderstandings or gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed as swiftly as they could be. The school should ensure that teachers are supported to check pupils' learning systematically so that misconceptions can be addressed before learning is moved on.
- The attendance of some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, is not as high as it could be. This means that these pupils are missing out on valuable learning time and all that the school has to offer. The school should ensure that it employs the most effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance.

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	148254
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10348377
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,219
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	144
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Dicker
CEO of the trust	David Clayton
Headteacher	John Burnham
Website	www.ormskirk.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Endeavour Learning Trust in April 2022. When its predecessor school, Ormskirk School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness.
- The school makes use of two registered providers of alternative provision.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- An inspector met with the CEO, the deputy CEO, the chair of the local academy council, and representatives of the trust, including the chair of trustees.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- 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 considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including local academy council and trustee meeting minutes, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

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