

Ormiston Horizon Academy

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

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal is determined that the school should provide the best possible education for pupils. He sets high expectations for staff and pupils. He is working relentlessly to establish a culture of high aspirations and achievement for all.
- The vice-principal, senior leaders and middle leaders support the principal's vision and initiatives effectively. As a result, there is a strong sense of purpose and direction across the school.
- The intake of pupils has grown considerably since the school opened in its current building. The expansion has been managed well.
- Leaders continue to develop the breadth of the curriculum to ensure that it offers a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They have a clear understanding of the key issues the school needs to address to maintain a good standard of education. They hold leaders to account and support them effectively.
- The school provides a safe environment for pupils. The vast majority of pupils behave well and enjoy their school life.
- The school has implemented a comprehensive programme of professional development for staff. As a result, teachers are better equipped to deliver courses that match the new requirements of GCSE qualifications.
- Effective induction programmes for new staff have helped to sustain the overall good quality of teaching at the school. Even so, with a much larger staff than at the time of the previous inspection, there are more inconsistencies in teaching quality.
- Although pupils' outcomes were broadly average in 2017, progress was weak for groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's strategies to develop pupils' literacy are having a positive impact on their reading and writing skills. However, there is not enough focus in the school on developing pupils' speaking skills.
- Since it opened, the school has not been successful in attracting sufficient numbers of learners to its 16 to 19 study programmes. The school will no longer offer these programmes from September 2019. Despite some positive changes to provision, learners are still not making sufficient progress, and the 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - reducing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high, especially for the most able pupils
 - developing pupils' attitudes to learning, so that they become more independent and resilient learners and make accelerated progress
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- Improve outcomes for learners in the 16 to 19 study programmes by:
 - ensuring that teaching is effective and focused on high attainment in academic and vocational courses
 - developing a positive learning culture, so that learners are clear about what they have to do to be successful and take more responsibility for their own progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal has led the school since it opened and has an unswerving determination to ensure its success. He has an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has demonstrated the ability to bring about improvements through effective strategic planning.
- With the support of an effective leadership team, the principal has established a culture of high aspirations. Leaders have maintained this culture as the intake of the school increased from 599 to 983 pupils since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders and governors are paying particular attention to the professional development of staff. There are extensive training programmes in place for teachers. Leaders check the impact that these training programmes have on the quality of teaching. They follow up issues that are identified during their evaluation and do not shy away from taking action if there is insufficient improvement.
- Leaders and governors analysed closely the reasons behind the drop in GCSE results in 2017. They came to the conclusion that the school did not have a sufficiently strong focus on meeting the requirements of the new examination specifications and new progress measures. In addition, they identified that some pupils had issues with motivation. This information was used to inform a rigorous training programme for teachers.
- The vast majority of teachers value the opportunities they have to develop their practice. The new members of staff, who have been appointed over the last two years as a result of the expansion of the school, benefit from effective induction programmes.
- The school provides effective training for middle leaders. In addition to subject-specific courses with examination boards, all subject leaders follow a leadership training course. As a result, they are confident to lead colleagues in their departments and are better equipped to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders have systems in place to ensure that the information they have about pupils' progress is accurate and reliable. Through the multi-academy trust network, assessments are moderated externally to provide quality assurance and validation of results. This approach allows leaders to track pupils' progress effectively and to identify where interventions are needed to prevent underachievement.
- Leaders are actively involved in the multi-academy trust mutual support network. They make the most of the opportunities this network offers in terms of staff professional development and sharing of effective practice.
- As the school expands rapidly, pupils join in Year 7 from an increasingly large number of primary feeder schools. Leaders are making sure that the induction of new pupils is effective. For example, pupils who are offered a place at the school are invited to attend a week of summer school at the start of the summer holiday.
- Early assessments of pupils' abilities and skills when they join the school allow the school to plan for the most effective use of the additional Year 7 catch-up funding for

mathematics and English. As a result, a large proportion of the pupils who are supported by the catch-up funding meet their targets for progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 7.

- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. In addition to removing specific barriers to learning, leaders use the additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to a wide range of educational activities. There is a clear focus on broadening pupils' horizons and raising their aspirations. School data for current cohorts shows that differences in progress between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils are diminishing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive effective support. Leaders make effective use of the additional funding to ensure that there are bespoke programmes in place so that pupils have full access to the curriculum and a positive experience of school, and make progress.
- Leaders continue to develop the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils. They are currently extending the range of subjects offered at key stage 3 to give pupils access to a wider range of options at key stage 4. For example, French is now offered in Year 8, in addition to Spanish, with the aim of having 70% of pupils studying a modern foreign language at key stage 4. Pupils are now offered three learning pathways at key stage 3 instead of two, based on their abilities and preferences. This will help them with their choice of subjects to study for GCSE.
- The curriculum, supplemented by enrichment activities, supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Every day, when lessons are over, pupils can stay to take part in a wide range of sports and other enrichment activities. The school endeavours to offer something for everyone. Clubs range from drama, music and art to Lego and 'dungeons and dragons'. Pupils can also take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. These enrichment activities are very popular and well attended.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is strong. Governors know the school well and understand what it needs to do to continue to provide a good education for pupils.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They reacted swiftly to the drop in performance in the 2017 GCSE examinations and ensured that leaders put in place effective improvement plans. They have created a strategic progress board to check the impact of the actions agreed with leaders at governors' board meetings.
- Governors contribute skilfully to all aspects of the strategic direction of the school. They have a thorough understanding of the school's financial management. For example, they supported leaders in the consultation on the closure of the sixth form and made sure that adequate funding was allocated for the last two years of the 16 to 19 study programmes. They ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school keeps up-to-date records and ensures that all members of staff receive appropriate training. Leaders are clear about their duty to develop robust practices to ensure that any pupil who may be at risk is swiftly identified and appropriately supported. They check that all members of staff are clear about their duty of care and feel sufficiently empowered to act when necessary to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders also make sure that pupils are taught to keep safe and know the risks inherent in the use of the internet and social media.
- Leaders have a good knowledge of the context in which they operate. They work well with external agencies and families to support vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge, and the relationships between teachers and pupils are overwhelmingly positive.
- As a result of a comprehensive training programme they have received, teaching is now geared effectively to meet all the criteria of the new specifications and teachers are effective at measuring the progress of individual pupils.
- Teachers plan their lessons with care and, in most cases, ensure that learning activities are engaging. There is clear evidence that the school's increased focus on developing teaching practice through intensive training is having a positive impact on the quality of the experience that pupils have in lessons. As a result, in most subjects, a high proportion of pupils enjoy the learning activities they have to do and use their lesson time productively.
- Pupils generally take pride in their work and collaborate willingly with each other in lessons. They respond positively to teachers' instructions and are attentive when teachers introduce new information or concepts. Consequently, there is an orderly and positive atmosphere in classrooms.
- The standard of work in exercise books is generally good and reflects the school's high expectations in terms of presentation.
- The school has a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy. Initiatives to improve reading and a focus on key vocabulary across the curriculum are having a positive impact. However, there is no concerted approach to encourage pupils to articulate their thoughts orally, and they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- Teachers have detailed information on pupils' individual characteristics, ability and prior progress and generally adapt tasks well to meet the needs of their pupils. While tasks that pupils are set often have an element of challenge, on occasion they are too easy for the most able pupils.

- The vast majority of pupils willingly get on with the work they are set to do. However, they are not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and they do not routinely take the initiative to tackle new work or extend their responses without being asked to do so.
- While teaching has strengths and is improving overall, it is more variable than it was at the time of the previous inspection and is not always in line with the high expectations set by leaders. This inconsistency is associated with the rapid expansion of the school, and its eradication is a top priority for school leaders.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a pleasant and inclusive environment for pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe at the school. There is an effective pastoral system that pupils refer to when asked about how safe they feel. They are secure in the knowledge that adults will intervene and help them should they have a problem. The school deals with bullying swiftly and effectively. Pupils are well informed about what constitutes bullying and are clear about how it affects those who are bullied.
- The school has well-established programmes to raise pupils' awareness of risks, including sexual exploitation and potential abuse on social media. Pupils attend talks by external speakers in assemblies. Issues concerning pupils' safety and welfare are discussed at tutor times and in lessons where appropriate.
- The curriculum, assemblies and tutor time contribute to the promotion of key values to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Many activities are designed to raise pupils' awareness of diversity and to promote tolerance and respect of other faiths and cultures. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of modern society beyond their own community and of current social issues.
- The school has a clear focus on 'opening minds, raising aspirations and improving life chances'. For example, the school has launched the 'Aspirations Academy', an initiative to support able pupils' ambitions. Through this scheme, pupils have the opportunity to attend a variety of events at universities across the country and familiarise themselves with what it is like to be a student.
- Pupils receive effective and impartial careers advice. This is a key part of the school's aspirations agenda. Pupils have many opportunities to get information about careers and to discuss their options. Pupils' developed knowledge of the range of possible careers open to them has a positive impact on their aspirations and attitudes to learning.
- The school actively promotes healthy eating. It also caters for the well-being of pupils through the various enrichment activities offered after school. For example, the school's fitness suite is very popular with pupils of all ages.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' appearance is smart. They wear their uniforms with pride. They are respectful of each other and of adults.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning. Most are attentive and work well together. Teachers deal effectively with the few occasions when pupils become distracted or distract others.
- The school made good behaviour one of its priorities from the start, and the behaviour codes are well established and well understood by all. School records show that behaviour incidents are dealt with effectively. As a result, while the school still has to resort to exclusions in extreme cases, the number of these exclusions continues to decrease.
- Overall attendance is improving and is broadly in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also improving. The school takes strong actions to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly. Pupils who have issues with attendance receive effective support.
- The school regularly checks on the attendance, welfare and progress of pupils who attend alternative provisions. Attendance is checked daily and a senior member of staff visits alternative provisions once a month to get an update on how pupils are getting on. Interventions are decided on jointly with alternative providers if required. The school receives a report of pupils' progress from alternative providers every term.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The overall progress of pupils who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2017 was broadly in line with the national average. However, they made less progress than pupils did in 2016. Progress in many subjects, including English, mathematics, science and humanities, was below national averages for some groups of pupils.
- Current school information on pupils' progress shows that pupils at key stage 4 are achieving well and are making good progress from their respective starting points across the curriculum, including in mathematics and English. Pupils at risk of underachieving are identified early and effective intervention strategies are in place to support them. Colleagues from other schools in the multi-academy trust check the progress data leaders collect to make sure that it is reliable.
- Key stage 3 pupils are making good or better progress, as shown by the school's assessment information. Assessments are quality assured internally by leaders and externally by schools in the multi-academy trust's network. Checks of pupils' work in exercise books during the inspection confirmed that pupils make good progress from their starting points across the curriculum.
- Information on current pupils' progress shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving over time. At both key stages 3 and 4, differences between the

progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and those of their peers are diminishing. Leaders continue to refine the way they track the progress of disadvantaged pupils to maximise the impact of the funding they receive.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive effective support to meet their targets. From their starting points, they make progress which is broadly line with that of other pupils.
- As part of their focus on raising aspirations, leaders are making sure that the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are well supported to make accelerated progress. Leaders are aware that this is not yet as strong as it could be. The new 'learning pathways' are designed to provide most-able pupils with opportunities to make more accelerated progress. The school data shows that the most able pupils are making increasingly good progress, especially at key stage 3 where there is a higher proportion of pupils with high prior attainment.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- In spite of the efforts of leaders and continued support of governors, the school was unable to attract sufficient numbers of learners to the 16 to 19 study programmes. As a result, the school will not offer these programmes from September 2019, and the current Year 12 and Year 13 learners are the last cohorts to be taught in the sixth form.
- Because of the small number of learners, the range of subjects is narrow.
- Outcomes for learners who left the school in 2017 were well below the national average both for academic and vocational qualifications. Learners who are currently in Years 12 and 13 are making comparatively better progress, but this is not consistent across the range of subjects.
- Although there is some effective teaching, overall it is inconsistent. At times, teaching is not sufficiently rigorous and challenging to meet the needs of learners.
- Learners are keen and have positive attitudes and high aspirations. However, they are not always clear about the standard they are working at or what they have to do to progress further.
- The new practices introduced by leaders are starting to improve the learning culture. In Year 12, new vocational courses have been introduced, which are popular with learners because they match their aspirations. Learners now benefit from better support and guidance. There is a generally positive atmosphere in the sixth form, in spite of the situation.
- Learners have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. They benefit from a pleasant and safe learning environment.
- Careers guidance for learners is as effective as it is in the main school. All learners have work experience placements and are well supported to pursue their careers interests. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

- A large proportion of the current Year 13 learners have been offered places on university courses.

School details

Unique reference number	136680
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10045523

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	983
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	40
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jonathon May
Principal	Rod Hughes
Telephone number	01782 883333
Website	www.ormistonhorizonacademy.co.uk
Email address	Rod.Hughes@ormistonhorizonacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Ormiston Horizon Academy is an average-sized secondary school. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils has grown from 599 to 983. The school is now over-subscribed and will be operating at full capacity from September 2018. From September 2019, the school will no longer offer 16 to 19 programmes of study and will

operate as an 11 to 16 school.

- The school is a sponsored academy of the Ormiston Multi-Academy Trust. Governance is delegated by the trust to the local board of governors through the Ormiston Academies Trust scheme of delegation.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The school uses three alternative providers: Sporting Stars, the Bridge, and Phoenix. All three are part of the Stoke-on-Trent local authority 'Learning Pathways Board'.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 54 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work from a range of subjects in key stages 3 and 4 as well as in the sixth form.
- Meetings took place with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and groups of pupils from across all years. The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body and with the Ormiston Academies Trust regional director.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, between lessons and after school.
- Inspectors took into account 69 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 73 members of staff who responded to the questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation of its provision and its development plan. Inspectors also considered information relating to achievement, teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and governance.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Henshaw	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Haskins	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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