

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Ormiston Forge Academy

Wrights Lane, Cradley Heath, West Midlands B64 6QU

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

Ormiston Forge Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of the school is Dr Lisa Mason. 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 Dr Julius Weinberg.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ormiston Forge Academy is a place where everyone is valued and included. Pupils understand and follow the school values of resilience, aspiration and respect. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils focus on their learning well. Staff and pupils share the same high aspirations. In the past, in a small number of subjects, some pupils have not achieved well. However, the school's work in addressing this has been effective. All pupils who spoke to inspectors say this is a positive environment to learn in.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. The majority of pupils show respectful behaviour during structured lesson times. During unstructured times, such as breaktimes and lunchtime, they behave sensibly. If pupils struggle with their behaviour, staff work effectively with them and help them to improve. This maintains the positive behaviours around school. Pupils are safe. They know who to talk to about any concerns they have.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. This includes mental health and well-being. Pupils can clearly explain their understanding of diversity and equality in society. Leadership opportunities include sixth-form student 'peer readers' and 'numeracy mentors' supporting younger pupils. Pupils regularly take part in activities such as darts, gardening and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

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

The school has raised expectations around learning and behaviour and has developed a highly-ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Revised approaches to teaching and learning have brought improvement in how pupils learn. However, despite this, the ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum has not yet led to consistently improving outcomes, in all subjects, by the end of key stage 4.

Students in the sixth form who spoke to inspectors are highly positive about their learning experiences and the wider opportunities the school provides. The school has rapidly developed its broad and ambitious curriculum in the sixth form. Sixth-form teachers engage students in challenging and independent learning. This enables students to achieve well. This success is also reflected by the wide range of high-quality destinations students move into. Students make a significant contribution to supporting the school, including through student leadership roles. These include duties at breaktime and lunchtime as well as mentoring and supporting younger pupils. Students benefit greatly from this strong provision.

Teachers use assessments well, check what pupils know and ensure that pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers use activities at the start of lessons to help pupils recall and build on their learning. Pupils say it helps them to remember the most important information. Most teachers adapt the learning to address any incorrect ideas or missing knowledge. This reduces any gaps in pupils' knowledge and enables them to deepen their knowledge and skills in some subjects.

The school quickly and effectively identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use precise information to adapt the learning for each pupil well. The school has prioritised reading. Support for pupils who are not fluent readers is in place and is having a positive impact. While staff talk about and promote reading with pupils, this is not yet fully embedded in the school culture. The school recognises this and continues to focus on this key aspect of its work.

The school's work to help pupils improve their attendance is having a positive impact and absence is reducing. However, there are too many pupils who miss school unnecessarily. This means that they miss out on too much learning. The school is continuing to review and revise its work with pupils, parents and external agencies to ensure the school's efforts are having maximum impact.

The provision for pupils' personal development is a strength of this school. Pupils' well-being is at the forefront of the school's vision. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is well-designed and sequenced. Pupils learn about topics including healthy relationships and online safety. Pupils and students in the sixth form receive extensive information on 'next steps' through high-quality careers guidance. They engage enthusiastically with this programme. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

All leaders, including those responsible for governance, understand deeply how the school's local context impacts pupils' learning and attendance. The trust holds the school to account well for all aspects of provision, including safeguarding and the quality of the sixth form. The school has implemented a comprehensive and well-thought-out professional development programme for staff, which they welcome. Recent changes to school policies and expectations have supported the leaders' commitment to 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)

- Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, do not attend school as well as they should. This affects their learning and achievement. The school should further build on its current work with parents and external agencies to ensure the barriers that stop pupils attending school are removed.
- The school has not fully embedded its support for pupils who struggle to read and has not fully developed a wider culture of reading among pupils. This means that some pupils still find reading difficult and not everyone sees the richness that reading for pleasure can bring. The school should ensure that all pupils who struggle to read benefit from the support in place and that reading for pleasure continues to be developed across the school.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	137673
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10343961
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	1638
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Julius Weinberg
CEO of the trust	Tom Rees
Principal	Dr Lisa Mason
Website	www.ormistonforgeacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ormiston Academies Trust.
- The school uses six registered and two unregistered alternative providers that a small number of pupils attend full-time or part-time, attending school on other days.
- 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 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked with some pupils about their learning.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. They also checked the school's website.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors held meetings with the chair of trustees; the chair, vice-chair and a governor of the local governing board; the principal and education director (north and west) of the trust; other school leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspectors also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector
Cat Woodsmith	Ofsted Inspector

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