

Inspection of Ormiston Denes Academy

Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4AH

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Kate Williams. This school is a member 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 is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinberg.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Ormiston Denes Academy. They recognise the substantial improvements that have taken place recently.

The school is highly ambitious for every pupil to succeed academically and develop personally. Staff motivate and help pupils to reach their potential. Pupils know that staff have their best interests at heart. As a result, most pupils strive to meet these high aspirations and do so.

Most pupils behave very well. They know what is expected of them in classrooms and around the school. Lessons are calm so that pupils can focus on their work. The school is a safe and friendly place. Pupils are kind to each other. They understand how people are different. They value and respect these differences. The school provides pupils with the effective support they need to improve their behaviour and attendance.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills, such as prefects and ambassadors. Clubs, events such as musical productions and 'enrichment days' broaden pupils' interests. The comprehensive careers and guidance programme, including work experience placements, helps pupils to make informed choices about their next steps.

The school has revised its curriculum and trained its staff, so that pupils now learn increasingly well. The 2024 low-published outcomes do not reflect the current strong quality of education pupils are now receiving.

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

The school has made great strides in developing its broad curriculum so that it clearly identifies what pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn important knowledge. It is this focus on what pupils need to learn that has improved the quality of education ensuring pupils are achieving better. Teachers regularly revisit prior learning so that it sticks in pupils' memory. This helps fill gaps in pupils' learning and addresses any misunderstandings that they may have.

Teachers typically use their strong subject knowledge to present new information clearly. They frequently use questioning with real skill to check how well pupils are learning. They use the information well to address any knowledge gaps or misconceptions. Staff identify the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), very well. They adapt tasks, without over-simplifying them, so that all pupils can access the curriculum successfully. As a result, in most subjects, pupils increasingly produce high quality work and achieve well. They engage well with ambitious texts and tasks. However, in a few subjects, this is not consistently the case. Teaching approaches are less effective. This is because in some cases there is not a secure enough understanding of how to teach specific subjects effectively. When this happens, pupils do not gain the breadth and depth of understanding that they should.

The school understands the importance of reading for pupils' achievement and interests. There are regular opportunities built into the school day for pupils to read. The school checks how well pupils learn to read. All key stage 3 pupils read to an adult. Well-trained staff work with weaker readers effectively to develop pupils' accuracy and fluency.

The school has made significant improvements to how well pupils attend and behave. The number of suspensions has fallen considerably this academic year. This is because staff are now largely consistent in how they follow the school's behaviour policy. The support of pastoral leaders and 'The 'Bridge' and 'Thrive' provisions is highly effective. This tenacious work enables pupils to better manage their feelings and their behaviour so that they and others, can focus on their learning. Pupils come to school much more often now because they enjoy school.

Pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. They say, without hesitation, that this is a school where people welcome each other as equals. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships and consent. They learn how to keep themselves safe in the local area, such as when swimming in the sea. The school leaves no stone unturned in its work to build pupils' self-esteem. It shows them the value of learning. For instance, in an assembly, pupils enjoyed hearing about the career journeys of their teachers.

The school fully supports staff to develop the quality of their work. Staff have a myriad of opportunities to develop their teaching expertise and to become leaders. As a result, staff are highly positive about working here. Trustees and governors rigorously check the effectiveness of the school's work. The school checks how well pupils are doing and makes well-considered changes, when necessary, to improve provision for pupils. The school has engaged successfully with parents. They trust the school to do the best for their children.

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, teaching is not as consistently effective as it is in stronger subjects. This means that pupils do not always gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they should. The school should support staff to deliver high quality learning experiences across the curriculum, so that pupils achieve highly in all subjects.

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	139403
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10345357
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	721
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
CEO of the trust	Tom Rees
Principal	Kate Williams
Website	www.ormistonden.es.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 July 2022

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions for pupils.
- 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 judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continuing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and the regional director of education of the trust.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- 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 scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses and free-text comments received during the inspection to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Asker	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025