

Inspection of Ormiston Sudbury Academy

Tudor Road, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 1NW

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Amnesty granted

Previous inspection grade

Good

The principal of this school is Sally Morris. This school is part of Ormiston Academy 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 overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinberg. There is also an education director, Richard Dolding, who is responsible for this school and four others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school as staff care about their well-being. If pupils experience an issue, staff provide support to help find a solution. Pupils value the rich range of clubs, activities and performance opportunities that allow them to follow their interests and develop their talents. Calm areas, such as the 'well-being suite', provide quiet spaces and opportunities for pupils to meet new friends and socialise.

There are now higher expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum where they have access to a more challenging range of subjects at GCSE. This helps better prepare them for their next steps. However, pupils do not consistently learn as well as they should.

Pupils understand the school's clear behaviour expectations and most pupils follow these. The school is a typically calm and orderly place to be. However, there are small pockets where pupils' learning is sometimes disturbed by others' behaviour.

Pupils miss out on some opportunities for parents and carers to support their learning. The school does not always communicate well enough about what students are learning or how problems are resolved.

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

The school and trust have worked to redesign the curriculum effectively. The curriculum is now ambitious, broad and balanced. For example, pupils now study for qualifications in computing and languages at the end of Year 11. The school ensures that the subjects pupils learn in Years 7 to 9 give them a firm foundation should they choose to study them for GCSE.

Effective curriculum plans have been introduced in core subject areas by the trust. Appropriate plans for a high-quality education are now in place, but the realisation of these in practice is a work in progress. Some teachers do not provide activities or plan sequences of lessons that help pupils remember important knowledge. Pupils do not have a secure understanding across the entire curriculum.

The school provides well-tailored support for those pupils at the early stages of reading to help them catch up. This includes support with phonics, fluency or comprehension, depending on individual pupils' needs.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as others. Pupils' needs are identified effectively and usually supported well. However, for some pupils with SEND, this support is not always precise enough, so their learning is patchy.

Most staff implement the behaviour policy effectively, but a small number do not. This means that, while many pupils' learning is not disrupted by others' behaviour, this is not the case for all. While most pupils behave well around the school, a small

minority of pupils are not supported well enough to take responsibility for their own conduct. Staff deal with any instances of bullying effectively, so pupils feel safe.

The school provides a wealth of personal development opportunities that cater for pupils' wider interests. Creative arts provision is a strength, and many pupils have opportunities with the Royal Shakespeare Company to develop their performance skills. The school has ensured that pupils learn effectively about relationships, tolerance and being accepting of difference through personal, social and health education (PSHE) and assemblies. The school has a highly developed careers provision across all year groups. Pupils are prepared well for future employment, education or training.

The school supports staff workload and well-being mindfully. The trust provides appropriate support for local governors, so that they fulfil their duties effectively. The trust provides effective hands-on school improvement support. However, this trust support has only recently had the desired impact in securing improvement. Consequently, leaders have not addressed areas for improvement as quickly as they could have. Some parents have concerns about the school's communication. This has led to some dissatisfaction with how the school has dealt with concerns. Some parents would like more information about what pupils will learn, so that they can better support learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not ensure that they help pupils to remember important subject knowledge by planning activities that focus on this knowledge, to enable pupils to build on previous learning effectively. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that staff have the expertise and guidance to enable them to plan and provide activities that enable pupils to learn intended knowledge securely, so that they achieve well.
- The school has not ensured that all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently, or that all pupils are supported to take full responsibility for their own conduct. Consequently, there are a small number of instances where pupils do not behave as well as they should. The school should ensure that the behaviour policy is applied consistently and that all pupils receive guidance and effective strategies to help them manage their own behaviour.
- The school does not always communicate well enough with parents about what pupils are learning or how issues are resolved. This means that parents can be left unclear about how to support their child's learning, or on how concerns involving their child have been addressed. The school should ensure that parents

are more fully informed regarding their child's learning and that means of effective communication are in place.

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	138506
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10287118
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julius Weinberg
Principal	Sally Morris
Website	www.ormistonsudburyacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Ormiston Academies Trust.
- The school has no pupils in the sixth form and is not currently running an active provision. Therefore, an amnesty was granted, as there was insufficient evidence to be able to inspect the sixth form.
- The principal took up post on 1 September 2023.
- The new trust regional director has been working with the school for a year.
- 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.
- A small number of pupils access alternative provision. The school uses two registered alternative providers, one of whom uses two unregistered providers for part of their provision offer. The school also uses one other unregistered provider sourced by the local authority. The school uses one tutor service, which has been put in place in conjunction with the local authority.

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 met with the following senior staff: the principal, members of the school senior leadership team, the regional director of the trust and governors. They also spoke on the telephone to leaders of alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and computing. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. These included: drama, languages, creative arts and physical education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- To gather their views on the school, inspectors spoke in formal meetings with various different groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school site while they observed break and lunchtimes. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils, parents and staff.
- Inspectors also conducted meetings and visits with staff to explore behaviour, SEND, alternative provision, personal development, attendance, elective home education, provision for early careers teachers, PSHE and relationships and sex education.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Carole Herman	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Gammons	Ofsted Inspector
Rowena Simmons	Ofsted Inspector

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