

Inspection of Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

Barnfield Avenue, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 6EP

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have raised their expectations of what pupils, including students in the sixth form, can and should achieve. That said, while pupils in key stage 3 are learning well, some pupils in key stage 4 and some sixth-form students are struggling to make up for the poor quality of education that they experienced in the past.

Most pupils feel happy and safe at school. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well in most lessons. However, some pupils are struggling to adjust to leaders' higher expectations of behaviour. Occasionally, these pupils disrupt the learning of others.

Leaders deal effectively with bullying incidents when they are reported. However, a small number of key stage 4 pupils told inspectors that they would be unlikely to tell teachers about bullying incidents or the use of disrespectful language.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through a range of extra-curricular activities. These include a rowing club and school theatrical productions. Pupils are keen to help out in their local community. For instance, they have raised money for the local hospice.

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

Leaders, including trustees and members of the local governing body, have successfully brought about considerable improvements at this school. For example, leaders have strengthened the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, clarified their curriculum thinking in most subjects and raised staff's expectations for pupils' behaviour.

Pupils enjoy a better quality of education now than they did in the past. This is making a real difference to pupils in key stage 3. These pupils are building their knowledge securely across a range of subjects. However, this is not the case for some pupils in key stage 4 and some sixth-form students. Weaknesses in the previous curriculum mean that these pupils have gaps in their learning. As a result, pupils' and students' academic success across the curriculum is variable.

Leaders have devised a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils study a wide range of subjects at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils can select from suitable academic and vocational qualifications matched to their needs, interests and ambitions. The proportion of pupils choosing to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects, although low, is increasing steadily.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the essential subject knowledge that they want pupils to know and the order in which this should be taught.

Teachers have benefited from support and training so that they are equipped to deliver the higher demands of the new curriculums. Most do this well. Some teachers are increasingly adept at identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions. However, some teachers are not using assessment strategies as effectively as they should to check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new learning.

The majority of sixth-form students build a deep body of knowledge in most subjects. Teachers prepare these students well for their next steps in education, training or work. Many students in the sixth form go on to further study or training linked to the subjects that they have studied. Nonetheless, a small number of students in the sixth form do not have the prior subject knowledge needed to access the higher level qualifications offered by the school. Teachers have not identified and addressed the considerable gaps in these students' knowledge. These students do not achieve as well as they should or do not complete their studies.

Leaders identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders provide teachers with appropriate information that enables them to support pupils with SEND well. Most teachers adapt their teaching to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Leaders promote the importance of reading. Pupils make good use of the library which has a wide range of high-quality books. Pupils across the school read during form time. Leaders have put effective systems in place to identify those pupils who are struggling readers. Leaders ensure that support is put in place to help pupils in key stage 3 to catch up quickly. This programme is in the early stages of being rolled out for pupils in key stage 4.

Most lessons are calm and purposeful. Many teachers address any low-level disruption quickly. However, a few teachers do not follow the school's behaviour policy consistently well. This means that some lessons are interrupted. This can be frustrating for other pupils. Most pupils attend school regularly. Even so, some pupils, and students in the sixth form, do not attend school as often as they should.

The leaders' programme to promote pupils' personal development including relationships and sex education is ordered well and age appropriate. All pupils and students receive a wealth of careers information and guidance. This includes purposeful experiences of work-related learning. Pupils have the information that they need to make appropriate decisions about their next steps in education, employment and training.

Members of the local governing body and trustees are knowledgeable about the quality of education provided by leaders. They are skilled in holding leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value highly the priority given by leaders to staff's training and development. They appreciate the respect that leaders show them. Leaders are cognisant of staff's workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured there is a robust culture of safeguarding. Leaders are aware of the dangers that pupils may face in the local community. They provide staff with suitable training to carry out their roles and responsibilities well. Staff are vigilant to any pupils who may be at risk of harm. They report and record any concerns appropriately. Leaders follow up assiduously on any concerns.

Leaders have forged strong links with external partners to ensure that vulnerable pupils, students and their families receive the help that they need.

Pupils and students are taught about potential risks and how to keep themselves safe through a well-structured and age-appropriate curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not identify the gaps that key stage 4 pupils and students in the sixth form have in their subject knowledge. These teachers do not check that pupils' prior learning is secure before introducing new content. As a result, the progress of some pupils through the curriculum is hampered. Leaders should ensure that teachers check on what pupils have learned and remembered, and use this information to devise appropriate learning activities.
- Some pupils do not behave as well as they should in some lessons. A small number of pupils do not show the respect to others that they should. This affects how well some pupils enjoy and engage in their learning. Leaders should ensure that staff implement the leaders' behaviour policy consistently well.
- Some pupils and students in the sixth form do not attend school as often as they should. This means that some pupils miss out on important learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils and students attend regularly.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	136185
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10268347
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,018
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
Principal	Kathryn Evans
Website	www.ormistonbolingbrokeacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ormiston Academies Trust.
- Leaders use two registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and representatives of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, art and design, social sciences, dance and animal care. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils', and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and students from Years 7 to 13 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, leaders' improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders of the alternative provision that is used by the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. Inspectors discussed matters relating to safeguarding with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paula Crawley	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector

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