

Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

Address: Barnfield Avenue, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6EP

Unique reference number (URN): 136185

Inspection report: 13 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ● ●
Needs attention	● ● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders promote an effective inclusive culture and hold high expectations for all pupils. Pupils' individual needs are identified accurately and promptly, including those of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are known or previously known to children's social care. This information is shared effectively with staff, enabling appropriate adaptations and support to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders work closely with families, the local authority and external professionals. This ensures that support is well coordinated and responsive to pupils' changing needs.

Strategic use of additional funding and targeted support helps to improve pupils' access to learning and their experience of school. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and evaluate the impact of support through regular reviews, adjusting provision where necessary to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

Staff receive guidance and training to help them meet each pupil's needs. Inclusive practices are generally understood and in place across the school. As a result, pupils who face additional challenges feel supported, attend more regularly and are increasingly able to engage positively in learning and wider school life alongside their peers. However, the impact of this work is not consistent for all pupils. Some approaches are still embedding and are not applied consistently across subjects or classrooms. As a result, a small number of pupils do not receive timely or effective support to overcome gaps in learning, attendance or behaviour and outcomes remain variable.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders and those responsible for governance make decisions that are consistently focused on pupils' best interests, particularly those who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are known or previously known to children's social care. Leaders demonstrate an understanding of the school's context and community and use this knowledge to prioritise support for pupils who face additional barriers to learning or wellbeing. They identify weaknesses and take action to address them. However, much of this work is recent or still embedding, and has not yet had sufficient time to lead to consistent improvements in provision or outcomes across the school.

Leaders have established processes to review and evaluate the effectiveness of their work and to check whether their actions are leading to sustained improvement in pupils' experiences and outcomes. Governance provides appropriate challenge and support. Governors and trustees know the school well and share leaders' commitment to inclusion. Trust leaders provide additional oversight and assurance, strengthening the school's work in areas, such as teaching and learning.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to a coherent and evidence-informed programme of professional learning that supports the development of expertise over time, including for early career teachers. Leaders are mindful of staff wellbeing and workload when making

decisions and staff feel supported. Leaders engage constructively with parents and carers and seek to work collaboratively with the community to support pupils and families.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are rooted in the school's ethos and values, which promote inclusion, respect and belonging. Structures such as the house system and pastoral arrangements help pupils to feel part of the school community and provide consistent support when pupils experience difficulties. Pastoral teams work closely with pupils and families, enabling concerns about wellbeing, behaviour or emotional health to be identified early and responded to appropriately.

Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities beyond the taught curriculum. These experiences support pupils to develop confidence, resilience and independence. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents through a range of physical, creative, leadership and outdoor learning activities. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to take part, so that access to these experiences is not limited by need or circumstance. Leaders monitor participation and engagement, although the impact of enrichment on pupils' aspirations and confidence varies.

Personal, social, health and economic education is planned across the curriculum and reinforced through regular tutor-time sessions. Pupils learn about equality, diversity and respectful relationships, including an age-appropriate understanding of protected characteristics. Pupils also have opportunities to engage in discussions and debates about faiths, religions and ethical issues through lessons, assemblies and tutor time. They develop their knowledge about physical and mental health, online safety and managing risk. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is developing and is reflected in their conduct and interactions with others, although this understanding is not consistent for all pupils. Relationships and sex education supports pupils to develop healthy attitudes and make informed choices. Careers education provides pupils with guidance about future pathways and opportunities to explore next steps. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their future.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Overall, pupils' achievement is inconsistent. While some pupils make secure progress from their starting points, too many pupils do not build their learning over time. As a result, pupils are not consistently well prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment. The quality of pupils' work reflects this variability. In some subjects, pupils are not supported to effectively secure new knowledge. They are unable to make connections between important curriculum concepts. Pupils do not achieve well in these subjects.

For pupils who have not yet secured strong knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, leaders recognise the need to prioritise support for these pupils' learning. Targeted

interventions are in place and are informed by pupils' identified needs. However, the impact of this support is not always sustained in classroom learning, and some pupils do not consistently apply or build on what they have learned when engaging with the wider curriculum.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve broadly in line with national averages, reflecting leaders' focused use of support and intervention. However, outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and some other pupils who face barriers to learning, remain variable. Overall attainment and progress remain below where they should be, and published outcomes reflect this inconsistency. Further improvement is required to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently well.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention ●

Attendance remains a key area for improvement. Overall, pupils' attendance remains below national averages and persistent absence is still too high for some pupils. Leaders consistently promote the importance of regular attendance and have clear systems to identify and follow up on absences. Staff work closely with pupils and families to understand barriers and draw on external professional support where appropriate. While there are early signs of improvement, leaders' actions have not yet resulted in sustained improvement over time, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who face ongoing barriers.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are generally positive and continue to improve. Clear expectations are understood and applied by staff, leading to calm and orderly routines in lessons and around the school. Most pupils engage appropriately in learning and respond well to guidance from adults. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and supportive, contributing to a positive school culture. Pupils say that bullying, unkindness or discriminatory behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Leaders provide timely support for pupils, who need help to manage their behaviour or emotions. The number of suspensions has reduced, reflecting clearer expectations and earlier support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Teachers' checks are not used consistently well to gauge pupils' understanding during lessons. As a result, misconceptions are not always identified or addressed promptly, and learning sometimes moves on before pupils are secure. This limits how well pupils deepen their understanding and apply what they have learned. The effectiveness of teaching is variable. Staff generally demonstrate secure subject knowledge and explain new concepts clearly. They know pupils well and take account of pupils' starting points, including those of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils known or previously known to children's social care.

Pupils do not yet consistently have the knowledge they need for their next steps. Leaders are strengthening professional development so that teachers can identify gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge and help pupils address these more quickly, although this work is still embedding. Leaders prioritise the development of subject-specific vocabulary and

foundational knowledge, particularly in reading. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read receive targeted support.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school and are aware of the areas that require further improvement. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is designed to build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Leaders' decisions reflect a commitment to improving the quality of education; however, the impact of these actions is not yet consistently evident in classroom practice.

Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Historically, students in the sixth form have not achieved as well as they should, and outcomes in national examinations have been weak. Leaders are aware of this and have analysed attainment and progress data to identify the factors limiting achievement. In response, they have begun to adapt aspects of the 16 to 19 study programmes, including curriculum design and delivery, to better reflect students' starting points and needs. These changes are at an early stage. While work seen shows some improvement in quality and students respond positively to higher expectations, this is not yet reflected in published outcomes, which remain below national averages.

Teaching does not consistently support students to make strong progress. Teacher checks are not used effectively enough to identify gaps in students' understanding or to adapt teaching to deepen their knowledge. Some students' written work lacks sufficient depth and accuracy to support higher levels of attainment. Disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate pastoral and academic support, but the impact of this support on achievement is not yet secure.

Students receive careers information, advice and guidance to support their next steps. They have opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school. While these aspects contribute to students' preparation for the future, further improvement is required to secure consistently stronger outcomes in the sixth form.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a welcoming and inclusive school, where they feel part of a community. The school's pastoral support shapes pupils' day-to-day experiences. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for by adults, who listen and respond when concerns arise. Pupils understand the importance of respect and kindness. They are confident that bullying, unkindness or discriminatory behaviour is taken seriously and dealt with promptly. These positive relationships help pupils to feel secure and supported in school.

Staff's management of pupils' behaviour continues to improve. Clear expectations and consistent routines help pupils to behave calmly in lessons and around the school. Working relationships between pupils and adults are respectful and supportive. This contributes to a purposeful learning environment. Staff provide additional support to help pupils manage their emotions and behaviour positively. At social times, pupils mix well with their peers and enjoy spending time outdoors. This supports positive interactions and a sense of community.

Many pupils benefit from activities beyond the classroom that support their confidence, independence and interests. Pupils particularly enjoy working in the school garden and taking part in experiences, such as trips to the beach. These activities contribute positively to pupils' enjoyment of school and their sense of belonging. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included in these opportunities and benefit from support that reduces barriers to their participation.

While many pupils enjoy school and engage positively in learning, their experiences are not consistently strong in all areas. Achievement remains uneven, and some pupils do not yet build learning securely over time. Variability in teaching affects how well pupils deepen their understanding and apply what they learn. Attendance also remains a concern. Despite leaders' work with families, too many pupils do not attend regularly enough, which limits the impact of improvements made in other areas.

Students in the sixth form experience supportive relationships and receive guidance about their next steps. However, outcomes remain weak, and further improvement is needed to ensure that students are consistently well prepared for future education, training or employment.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils secure the knowledge and skills they need at each stage of learning, so that they make consistent progress from their starting points across subjects and are well prepared for their next steps.
- Leaders should ensure that teaching enables pupils to build knowledge cumulatively over time by strengthening the consistent use of formative assessment, so that pupils' learning is checked and teaching is routinely adapted.
- Leaders should accelerate improvement in attendance by further strengthening work with families and external partners, so that overall attendance rises and persistent absence reduces, particularly for those pupils who experience ongoing barriers to regular attendance.
- Leaders should improve the consistency and quality of post-16 teaching so that students make stronger progress from their starting points and improvements in students' work lead to improved examination outcomes.

About this inspection

This school is part of 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 overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinberg.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, other senior and curriculum leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer of the trust, members of the local governing body and a representative from Halton local authority. She also met with a regional director from the trust.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Principal : Kathryn Evans

Lead inspector:

Rebecca Sharples, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Stephanie Gill, Ofsted Inspector

David Woolley, Ofsted Inspector

Gil Bourgade, Ofsted Inspector

Kevin Sexton, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

829

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,250

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

58.32%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.14%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.11%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	32.6%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	23.5%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	35.8	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	37.3	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.7	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.66	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.63	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	21.1%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	22.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	15.3%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	31.0	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.3	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.0	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.86	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.78	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	21.1%	52.8%	-31.8 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	22.8%	53.1%	-30.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	15.3%	52.4%	-37.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	31.0	50.3	-19.3
2023/24 (final)	34.3	50.0	-15.7
2022/23 (final)	34.0	50.3	-16.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.86	0.16	-1.02
2022/23 (final)	-0.78	0.17	-0.95

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	R	R	R
2023/24 (final)	28.74	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.70	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	R	R	R
2023/24 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average

The Key Stage 5 data we used for this inspection has not yet been published; therefore, we have not provided it alongside this school's report card. 'R' in the table indicates that the data is not yet available. We will update the table when the Department for Education publishes the data for the latest academic year.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	12.4%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	13.4%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.5%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	34.3%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	39.8%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	37.4%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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