

Inspection of Ormiston Chadwick Academy

Liverpool Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 7HU

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Jennifer Lowry-Johnson. 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 (CEO), Tom Rees, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julius Weinberg.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since December 2016.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ormiston Chadwick Academy is a friendly and caring community. Pupils have positive relationships with their peers and staff. Pupils are happy and they feel safe in school.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning. In most subjects, pupils achieve well. Mostly, pupils behave well and they engage purposefully in their activities. Strong pastoral support underpins pupils' positive attitudes to their education.

Pupils value their positions of responsibility. For example, some pupils act as reading buddies for younger pupils. Other pupils contribute to trust-wide forums to share their views. The school and the trust listen carefully to pupils' ideas and act on this feedback.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. These include participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, choir, drama and a varied range of sports clubs. The school supports pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to broaden their interests and experiences.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is reflected in the increasing number of pupils who are choosing to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Subject curriculums identify what pupils should learn. In most subjects, this enables teachers to design learning that builds pupils' knowledge over time. However, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge from the previous curriculum. This makes it difficult for them to connect and deepen their learning when new concepts are introduced.

Teachers typically check that pupils have learned subject content. Usually, teachers help pupils to overcome any misconceptions. However, teachers sometimes do not go beyond making sure that pupils can recall basic facts and terminology. This means that, sometimes, they do not spot gaps in pupils' understanding. This hinders some pupils from deepening their learning over time.

The school identifies pupils with SEND effectively. Staff use the information that they receive about pupils' needs to adapt their delivery of the curriculum well. This enables pupils with SEND to succeed in their learning.

There is a strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and their enjoyment of reading across different subjects. Staff quickly identify pupils who find reading difficult and give them the support that they need to catch up.

Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning. This contributes to the calm and orderly environment in classrooms and around the school site.

Attendance is a high priority within the school. The school's actions have had some success. Some pupils attend school more regularly than they did in the past. Even so, the school's work has not gone far enough in tackling the low attendance rates and poor punctuality of a considerable proportion of pupils. These pupils miss out on valuable learning time and all that the school has to offer.

Pupils follow a well-designed programme that promotes their personal development. They learn about a wide range of issues to prepare them appropriately for life in modern Britain. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to debate moral and social issues. Pupils also hear from a range of external speakers. Pupils learn to celebrate the differences between people. They apply this learning in their respectful behaviour towards each other. Pupils receive effective guidance and advice to help to inform their future steps in education, employment or training.

The school, including trustees and members of the local governing body, are well equipped to carry out their roles. They have appropriate processes in place to ensure that they hold the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff feel well supported by the school and the trust. For example, opportunities to collaborate with each other and networks for subject design has reduced staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some pupils have gaps in their learning from the previous curriculum. This makes it difficult for them to connect their learning when they are introduced to new subject knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers help pupils to bridge the gap between the previous curriculum and the heightened expectations in the revised curriculum.
- In a small number of subjects, some teachers do not use assessment strategies sufficiently well to make sure that pupils have understood their learning. This hinders pupils from deepening their knowledge over time. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment techniques more effectively so that they are checking pupils' learning beyond their basic recall of facts.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This hinders how well these pupils progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that

it analyses the impact of its strategies to improve attendance, so that these pupils and their families receive the most appropriate support.

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	140864
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10290259
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	934
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julius Weinberg
CEO of the trust	Tom Rees
Principal	Jennifer Lowry-Johnson
Website	www.ormistonchadwickacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 October 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Ormiston Academies Trust.
- The school makes use of four 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 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed the continued 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, science, modern foreign languages and art and design. 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 considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust and members of the local governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- 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.
- 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
Phil Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
Niall Gallagher	Ofsted Inspector

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