

Inspection of Ormiston Meridian Academy

Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7DF

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, staff and pupils have worked together with determination and enthusiasm to continually raise standards. Staff are ambitious for pupils. They want them to achieve academically and blossom as young adults. They expect pupils to work hard, behave well and value others. Pupils know that staff want the best for them, and rise to meet these demands.

Pupils are strong advocates for their school. They are proud of their achievements and the way they actively contribute to school life. They willingly take on extra responsibility, for instance as student leaders. They do this diligently and conscientiously. Staff listen to and value pupils' views and opinions.

Pupils' behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning. Classrooms are places where pupils get on with their work. Leaders have high expectations, and continually strive to improve pupils' behaviour. Teachers act promptly to stop pupils' misbehaviour disrupting the learning of others. Staff work alongside pupils to help them improve their behaviour while making sure that they do not fall behind.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Pupils know that staff do not tolerate bullying and that they will act quickly when it does happen.

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

The principal, supported by senior leaders and the trust, is unrelenting in her drive to improve the school. She leads with integrity and compassion. Staff share a common vision for the school and its pupils. They are prepared to go the extra mile and embrace new ideas. This collective effort ensures that staff and pupils do not rest on their laurels.

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. It supports pupils' academic achievement and wider personal development. There is an emphasis on readying pupils for life beyond the school gates. At key stage 4, pupils study an appropriate blend of academic and vocational qualifications. However, the number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) has fallen. This is because not enough pupils learn a modern foreign language. Leaders have reacted well to bolster this aspect of the curriculum.

Teachers are well supported by the curriculum plans in each subject. The plans identify what pupils 'must know' and what it would be 'good to know' in detail. The elements are fused together in a logical and sensible way so that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers share and discuss resources that help bring learning to life. Consequently, pupils learn well, and progressively build their knowledge and understanding.

In lessons, teachers constantly check that pupils remember what they have learned before. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported well. Pupils told inspectors that when teachers spot a gap in their learning, they change their plans to address this. As a result, pupils build new learning on secure foundations.

Leaders have introduced many strategies to help develop consistency in curriculum planning and delivery. Leaders are now reviewing how well these strategies are helping pupils to learn. However, this is at an early stage, as many approaches have only recently been established. Consequently, leaders cannot currently identify and promote the aspects that are making the biggest difference to how and what pupils learn.

Pupils who need help with their phonics knowledge are supported by trained staff. Pupils regularly read out loud in lessons. Teachers take time to introduce technical terms and vocabulary in a deliberate way. This helps build pupils' understanding. Yet many pupils do not read for pleasure. This means that they miss the enjoyment and insight that reading provides.

The school's personal development programme is stimulating and memorable. Pupils learn about the lives of others and are taught to challenge prejudice. They value diversity and champion equality. This contributes to a culture firmly founded on mutual respect. Pupils profit from a careers programme that broadens their horizons and encourages them to aim high. Consequently, they are well equipped to make good choices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are alert to signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They are well trained and know the importance of reporting a concern, no matter how trivial it may seem. Leaders act promptly, meticulously following up reports to ensure that pupils receive the right help and support.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' mental health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also ensured that pupils know what harmful sexual behaviour is, and how to report it. Pupils trust that staff will listen to them and act in their best interests should they raise a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not enough pupils have opted to learn a modern foreign language at key stage 4. This means that the proportion of pupils studying the EBacc is too low. Leaders

should ensure that they enact their plans fully so that a greater proportion of pupils complete the EBacc and it is at the heart of the school's curriculum.

- Too few pupils read for pleasure. As a result, they miss out on the wonder of a well-told story and the different social, cultural and historical perspectives that reading provides. Leaders should make sure that pupils are enthusiastic and habitual readers who read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, articles and texts across styles and genres.
- To improve pupils' learning, leaders have introduced a plethora of strategies and approaches. Staff have embraced these. However, leaders do not yet know which of these make the biggest difference to pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that they fully evaluate their strategies so that they can concentrate on the aspects that make the biggest difference.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

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| Unique reference number | 142186 |
| Local authority | Stoke-on-Trent |
| Inspection number | 10212201 |
| 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 | 967 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Paul Hann |
| Principal | Claire Stanyer |
| Website | https://ormistonmeridianacademy.co.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school is sponsored by the Ormiston Academies Trust, which it joined in September 2017.
- The number of pupils in the school has grown over the past three academic years.
- The school uses five registered providers of alternative provision. A small number of pupils attend one of these.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for careers education.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers, members of the local governing body and representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, modern foreign languages, science, history, art and drama. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors visited form time and reviewed the school's personal development programme with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to a staff survey, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- An inspector spent time talking to leaders at the one of the external alternative providers used by the school.
- An inspector visited and spent time in the respect room talking to staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ian Tustian, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| David Hermitt | Ofsted Inspector |
| Claire Price | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Huw Bishop | Ofsted Inspector |

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