

Birmingham Ormiston Academy

1 Grovesnor Street, Birmingham, B4 7QD

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders, governors and sponsors are highly effective. They provide students with a curriculum that is innovative, exciting and dynamic.
- Students make good progress in all subjects and acquire a wide range of skills. Their good achievement is due to the high quality of teaching.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They are a credit to their academy. Their highly positive attitudes make the academy a safe, friendly and harmonious place. There is a strong culture for learning, and students value the experiences the academy provides.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and benefit from a range of exciting enrichment activities.
- Senior leaders have quickly established systems to monitor the academy's performance. They have used training well to improve teaching. The Principal rigorously pursues excellence and communicates her vision extremely well to staff and students.
- A key element in students' good progress is the way learning is adapted to the students' needs. Staff know all the students well and they provide highly effective support to help them to be successful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The marking of students' work, while effective in some subjects, is too variable and in some cases does not provide students with enough guidance on how to improve.
- Time spent with form tutors is not always used effectively to promote achievement.
- The academy's planning is not focused enough on regular evaluations of improvement plans that hold members of staff to account for their actions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, taught by 24 different teachers; some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. They also spent time looking at students' work.
- The inspectors analysed the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to and during the inspection. In total, there were 13 responses on-line and one written response. Inspectors also took note of the staff inspection survey.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the improvement plan, progress data, minutes of meetings of the governing body, attendance data and records showing how the academy cares for and protects students.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff and senior leaders.

Inspection team

Jane Millward, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Davies

Additional Inspector

Robert Bourdon-Pierre

Additional Inspector

Alan Jarvis

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Full report

Information about this school

- Birmingham Ormiston Academy first admitted students in Year 12 to temporary accommodation in September 2011. It opened officially in September 2012 to students in Year 10. The academy now educates students from the ages of 14 to 19.
- The academy is sponsored by the Ormiston Trust and Birmingham City University. It specialises in creative, digital and performing arts. Students are selected according to their aptitude in these art forms.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals, for those looked after in public care, and for children of service families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- No students are educated in alternative provision off site.
- Senior leaders do not enter students early for GCSEs and they have a well-thought-out strategy to support this view.
- There are, as yet, no public examination results to allow the academy's performance to be measured against the floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' progress by improving the quality of teachers' marking, making sure that:
 - marking is linked to students' targets
 - marking provides students with constructive direction on how to improve in all subjects
 - teachers monitor how students respond to marking and that it leads to improved outcomes.
- Increase the effectiveness of how leaders plan actions to secure school improvement by:
 - making regular evaluations on the improvement work set out in action plans
 - ensuring timescales for actions keep the academy on track and hold staff to account for their actions.
- Ensure that good or better teaching takes place during tutor time to promote achievement by:
 - replicating the best use of tutor time across the school
 - ensuring senior leaders monitor tutor time more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Given their different starting points on entry to the academy, students make good progress across all subjects. Their good standards in English and mathematics are due to the effective teaching and because the development of literacy and mathematical skills is a focus in all lessons. The high-quality teaching enables students to succeed. Staff continually review students' progress and attainment and make adjustments to teaching to make sure students are on track to reach their target grades.
- Tracking of students' attainment and progress is accurate and rigorous. Students know how well they are doing, and interventions are promptly put in place for any student requiring support.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding receive additional help and, as a result, they also make good progress. Funding is used to provide one-to-one tuition, and the impact of this work is evident through the progress these students are making.
- Students' reading skills are developed well across the curriculum and they read a wide and varied range of books. Reading is given a high priority across all subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs benefit from well-tailored support. Their needs are well met and they make strong progress.
- The specialist subjects, for example, musical theatre, visual art and design, creative media and games, and new media, give students the opportunity to develop skills and experiences that are rarely available. As a result, they make consistently good progress. This is because of the skilful teaching and the very high expectations placed on students. For example, students in an acting lesson performed to a high standard when creating a physical machine using sound and body movement. Due to the high-quality teaching they cooperated very well as a group and used each other to enhance their work.
- Senior leaders do not enter students early for GCSEs and they have a well-thought-out strategy to support this view.
- Links to other subjects also contribute to students' good achievement. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed in all subjects. For example, in a history lesson in Year 10, students used role play and their well-developed speaking skills to learn about Galen, the Roman philosopher.
- Many students choose to attend extra activities which enrich their education. They are exciting and creative; for example, students rehearse plays to perform in the Birmingham Old Repertory Theatre.
- Tutor groups contain students of different ages. In some cases, tutor time is used very well to develop students' learning. For example, students held a highly effective and motivating debate on the use of the death penalty. However, in other tutor groups, time is not used well and students' learning is not enhanced.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students in the academy benefit from good teaching and some that is outstanding. Teachers'

strong subject knowledge helps them deliver well-planned lessons with confidence. Relationships between teachers and students are consistently excellent.

- 'The teachers push us hard, which is good.' This view from a student is common. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve. Over the year, there has been a marked improvement in teaching which has resulted from effective training and support. This is particularly true for the newly qualified teachers who have received a rigorous and highly effective induction programme.
- Senior leaders and governors have appointed professionals from industry to support the teaching of the academy's specialism. For example, a radio disc jockey from a local radio station teaches students broadcasting. This enhances the teaching and provides real and relevant experiences for the students.
- In almost all the lessons, teachers ask probing questions and encourage students to discuss their ideas. Staff training has resulted in a consistent approach to teaching. However, teachers are still encouraged to personalise students' learning and they tailor it very well to individual students' needs.
- Students are aware of the levels at which they are working and understand their targets to help them achieve their expected grades. Informative progress reports are sent home to parents every six weeks to make sure students remain on track with their studies.
- Students make good progress in the sixth form as a result of good and better teaching. Teachers know all the students very well and all students in Year 13 receive individual plans to help them improve their work. These include specific guidance to enable each student to achieve their potential.
- Students' work is marked regularly; in many cases the marking provides an effective balance of praise and challenge. However, this is variable across the academy, and some students are not given enough guidance on how to improve. Students do not always use the guidance from teachers well enough to accelerate their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is exceptional. Students are eager to learn and make a very strong contribution to their own learning. Instances of off-task behaviour in lessons are rare. Students show very good attitudes to learning and they are keen to succeed. They understand the importance of education and value the experiences the academy provides.
- Behaviour around the school site is calm and orderly. Students are unfailingly polite. They respect adults and each other and routinely show consideration and compassion.
- Instances of bullying are extremely rare. Students are supportive of each other and mixed-year tutor groups support the students making good relationships across the academy. Students understand different types of bullying and report, 'We look out for each other.'
- Students show a great maturity around the school. As a result, students feel safe. Parents also agree that their children feel safe at school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and supports their excellent behaviour. The opportunities to develop cultural and social understanding are of a

high quality, and students immerse themselves in a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, students in Year 12 thoroughly enjoyed working with industry professionals when rehearsing for Shakespeare's *Henry V* play.

- Attendance for students of compulsory school age is above the national average. Students enjoy their time at school. In the sixth form, attendance is less strong, but there are valid and justified reasons, for example, students working with local industry on the school's specialism. There have been no exclusions since the academy opened.
- Students are proud of their school and their surroundings. They value the opportunities the academy provides and report, 'There is a real sense of togetherness here!'

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders are working tirelessly to develop a unique academy which combines innovation with the development of core skills. Although a relatively new leadership team, they have quickly established clearly defined roles and responsibilities. There is a shared vision and agreed values of what the academy promotes. 'Imagine everything' is a vision to which the whole school community is committed. For example, students successfully compete for awards and work placements at a national level.
- The Principal is tenacious and has quickly put into place structures to secure continued improvement. She is ambitious for the school and determined that all students will succeed. She is supported well by a knowledgeable senior leadership team.
- There is a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and raising standards. A key to the academy's success is that all students feel valued and expectations are high. There are rigorous systems to manage teachers' performance. These are closely linked to the standards that teachers should achieve and are aligned to the academy's priorities.
- The curriculum is innovative and combines the development of core skills with the academy's specialism. This works particularly well and supports the students' good achievement. For example, stage lighting work is closely linked to science studies, and dance movement is linked to the teaching of mathematics.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is managed well. There is a rigorous plan to monitor the quality of teaching which involves senior and middle leaders. As a result, leaders hold an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the academy. Although there is a clear vision of how the academy will develop, action planning is not rigorous enough. There are too few procedures to evaluate its success, and timescales do not show clearly when actions will happen.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors and sponsors are exceptionally skilful, and their expertise provides highly effective support to the academy. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and monitor the school's performance data very well. They have clear expectations about the academy's performance, including a vision to become outstanding. They ask challenging questions and ensure the school provides very good value for money, including the spending of pupil premium funds. The support and challenge are instrumental in guiding the academy to move forward. Governors are involved in how teacher's performance is managed and they rigorously tackle staff if they do not teach to the academy's high standards. Middle leaders regularly present analytical information to the governors and sponsors and, as a result, they have an accurate view of how well all departments are performing. Governors and sponsors take their

responsibilities for safeguarding seriously and safeguarding procedures are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136944
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	399860

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	625
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	498
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toby Salt
Principal	Gaynor Cheshire
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 359 9300
Fax number	0121 359 9300
Email address	Gaynor.cheshire@boa-academy.co.uk

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