

Inspection of Ormiston Venture Academy

Oriel Avenue, Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, Norfolk NR31 7JJ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

The principal of this school is Simon Gilbert-Barnham. This school is part of the 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 Dr Julius Weinberg.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness 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 May 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do excellently at 'Venture'. They benefit from the highest expectations of what they can achieve. They rapidly develop academically and personally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn as well as their peers, and often better. Disadvantaged pupils thrive in an aspirational and affirming pastoral ethos.

Behaviour is superb. There is a palpable sense of purpose in classrooms. Pupils take considerable pride in their learning. They treat peers and adults with respect. Pupils enjoy very supportive relationships with staff who go above and beyond to meet their needs.

Pupil leaders are passionate about making the school even better. A large proportion of pupils have leadership roles. They contribute successfully to multiple aspects of the school's provision, such as clubs, helping young carers and charity work. They plan and lead 'guilds', short courses to develop pupils' interests. Pupils praise how their voices results in improvements, for instance in the outdoor environment.

There is a huge range of wider opportunities. Many disadvantaged pupils say they get to do things they never could otherwise, for example trips abroad. Pupils develop their 'Venture Virtues', building strong character traits such as resilience. As a result, they feel a strong sense of belonging and enjoyment at the school.

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

The trust and the school have sustained their vision for outstanding education over time. Leaders are relentless and skilful in ensuring this is realised in practice. Trustees and governors have provided robust oversight. This has led to highly positive experiences and outcomes for pupils.

The curriculum is meticulously designed. Subjects identify in granular detail the knowledge pupils need. Teachers explain and model this expertly. They check routinely that pupils remember and understand learning. For example, they use questions adeptly to elicit deeper thinking. Consequently, pupils build rich knowledge over time. They apply it with assurance in ambitious tasks. For instance, they write essays in impressively scholarly language in English. Pupils produce wonderful work, such as stunning pieces of art. This gives them a tremendous sense of achievement.

The school takes highly effective steps to ensure that all pupils, including those who need extra support, can succeed. Weaker readers receive high-quality help to access the curriculum. Pupils who need it get help with foundational skills, for example handwriting. Pupils develop their English and mathematical skills coherently across subjects. This well-integrated support enables them to progress through the curriculum very successfully.

Leaders and staff work cohesively to identify SEND with care and accuracy. Staff adapt learning with considerable skill and detail for these pupils. The calm and orderly behaviour supports the learning of those with mental health needs, for example if they have

anxieties. As a result, pupils with SEND feel well supported and learn with a high degree of confidence.

The school has an established culture of very positive behaviour. Staff are consistent and determined in teaching pupils what it expects, helping them to understand how to behave and engage positively. Pupils find the strong emphasis on rewards motivational. They wear their badges with pride. Pupils learn to live and breathe the school's values through the 'Venture Way'. The school recognises and addresses the underlying reasons behind any misbehaviour or absence. As a result, this leads to exemplary conduct and engagement in pupils' learning.

The programme for personal development is exceptionally well designed and delivered. Pupils learn content that is threaded with great precision through the curriculum and the wider work of the school. This means they make rich connections, such as when learning about different societies in both history and assemblies. They articulate this with notable maturity.

Pupils receive a very strong careers education. The school provides pupils with a broad range of experiences to support future education and career options. This includes both academic and workplace experiences. Careers guidance and support are wide ranging. As a result, pupils are well-equipped to make informed choices about their next steps.

Staff enjoy excellent professional development. They share a collective passion with leaders in developing all aspects of provision. Staff buy into and apply the school's aims with unerring consistency. This helps the school maintain its exceptional standards for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	136187
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10318599
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	900
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Julius Weinberg
CEO of the trust	Tom Rees
Principal	Simon Gilbert-Barnham
Website	www.ormistonventureacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal was appointed in 2013, after the previous inspection.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the CEO of the trust, the trust's director of education, the principal, other senior leaders, staff, and pupils.
- As part of evaluating governance and the work of the trust, the lead inspector spoke by phone with a trustee and met with the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including academy development plans, and policies such as for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector
Tessa Holledge	His Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Warner	Ofsted Inspector

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