

Ormiston Victory Academy

Middleton Crescent, Costessey, Norwich, NR5 0PX

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The academy's answer to the question 'What can you expect from these students?' is simple: 'A great deal'. Achievement is outstanding because every student matters.
- The Principal inspires staff and students and demands very high standards. She has created an outstanding leadership team that is sustaining and extending the academy's strengths.
- Outstanding teaching and widespread good practice in marking ensure that students enjoy their work and know how to improve it. They make very rapid progress.
- The academy is on course to meet its very high GCSE examination targets for 2013. Sixth form standards are improving rapidly and are above average.
- Students who join the academy with weak literacy and numeracy skills quickly gain the tools they need to learn effectively.
- Students who need additional help are supported very well. This allows them to reach their full potential.
- Students are rightly proud of their academy. Their excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes ensure a superb climate for learning. Students grow in confidence as they move up the academy.
- Students have an exceptional range of learning experiences in lessons and through the wide enrichment programme.
- Leaders at all levels are highly effective. They check all aspects of the academy's work intensely and constantly seek further improvement. Their advice and support is valued by other schools.
- The governing body and the academy sponsors are very well informed about the academy's work. Leaders are constantly challenged to do better. The governing body has had a marked influence on the academy's development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 46 lessons. Eight lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed small group sessions and an assembly, and listened to students read. The timing of the inspection meant that many of the lessons for older students were focused on revision.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of seven members of the governing body, representatives of the academy sponsor, a group of leaders from schools and other organisations supported by the academy, and groups of students, teaching assistants and classroom teachers.
- Various academy documents were examined along with a sample of students' work in several subjects.
- The views of students, staff, parents and carers were taken into account by considering the academy's own surveys and 87 responses from parents and carers to the online inspection questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Stephen Abbott, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Rachel Hobson

Additional Inspector

John Mason

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2010 following the closure of its predecessor, Costessey High School. It is a smaller than the average secondary school, with a growing sixth form.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well below the national average because of the strict criteria used in the academy. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also well below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to improve the progress of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who belong to military service families, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- All students are educated on the premises as the academy does not make use of offsite provision.
- New school buildings are currently under construction.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop assessment and marking by ensuring that:
 - the academy's overall assessment and marking policy is suitably adapted within each subject to ensure that students get the most appropriate feedback
 - all assessment and marking consistently matches the best practice within the academy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students make rapid progress in a wide range of subjects, so that attainment is well above average by the end of Year 11. Students in all year groups are making excellent progress in the key subjects of English and mathematics. Students who start the academy with below average literacy and numeracy skills are quickly helped to catch up, so that most are at the level expected for their age by the end of Year 7. From then on, they use their reading, writing and mathematical skills well to support further learning.
- Standards have risen steeply since the academy opened. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen from 38% in the predecessor school in 2010 to 68% in 2012. A considerable further rise is expected in 2013, based on the early results already obtained and the academy's record of accurately forecasting results. All students are on target to achieve five or more good GCSE grades, with most including English and mathematics.
- In the great majority of lessons, students are strongly committed to learning. They are keen to understand new ideas and take individual responsibility for improving their knowledge and skills. They regularly seek guidance from teachers outside lesson time to improve their performance.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, medical needs and other disadvantages are helped to match the outstanding achievement of other students by carefully planned adaptations to lessons. Students' needs are assessed when they join the academy and kept under close review once the precisely targeted programmes of support are put in place.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to give extra support to targeted students. As a result, the gap in attainment between these students and others in the academy is closing rapidly. In 2012, the results of these students in Year 11 were only half a grade below the results of others in English and a third of a grade below them in mathematics, a much smaller gap than seen nationally.
- Sixth-form results in 2012 were strong in vocational qualifications, such as child care, beauty, business studies and tourism, and in A level courses, particularly in science. In 2013, an above-average proportion of students are completing the courses they started. Standards have risen in AS and A levels to above average, with many more students on target for high grades. As a result, increasing numbers are achieving places at prestigious universities.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The academy's relentless focus on improving teaching has underpinned its rapid improvement and the outstanding achievement of its students. Teachers know that only good or outstanding teaching is acceptable and they work extremely hard to maintain this standard. The inspection confirms the view of senior leaders that very few lessons require improvement.
- Despite a necessary focus on revision for many students, most lessons were stimulating and many were innovative. The key features of the good and outstanding lessons observed were:
 - the use of a wide range of resources to capture students' interest and to make the lessons highly enjoyable
 - high expectations of students' work and behaviour, with very careful planning to meet individual students' needs and to challenge the most able students

- an intense focus on guiding students on how to improve, both as they work and through written feedback
 - teachers using their very good subject knowledge, going beyond the syllabus where necessary to promote deeper understanding among students
 - very good briefings for teaching assistants to maximise the impact of their support
 - excellent use of homework, which increasingly uses the academy's virtual learning environment to allow students to access resources on-line
 - plentiful opportunities to use and apply mathematics, for example in tourism, business studies, and science, and in the use of geometric designs in art.
- There were excellent examples of teachers promoting reading, writing and communication skills, including a debate on capital punishment in a Year 10 social education lesson, a recreation of the parliamentary discussion on the abolition of slavery in a history lesson in Year 7, and a strong emphasis on how to communicate with a client in a beauty therapy lesson in Year 10.
- In the small number of lessons where teaching required improvement, the main problem was that the teachers did not check on students' progress well enough during the lesson and did not push them quite as hard into new areas of learning.
- Students value highly the dialogue that develops between them and their teachers through the 'green pen system', where teachers set further challenges and students respond in green ink to demonstrate their improving standards. While this system works very well in many cases, it is not working consistently. All subjects follow the academy's general marking policy, but some have not adapted the general principles fully to meet the particular needs of their disciplines. In mathematics, some exercises do not provide enough variations to fully develop students' understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- One of the most striking features of the academy is the way that behaviour has been transformed since its opening. From day one, the principal made it a priority to establish a well-understood behaviour management strategy and to insist that it is applied consistently by all staff. As a result, good behaviour is the norm. Students conduct themselves in a very impressive manner that is often commended by outsiders.
- Students' highly positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to their outstanding achievement. There is very little disruption in lessons or misbehaviour around the academy. Major sanctions, such as internal isolation or exclusions are now rarely required.
- Students are proud of their academy and highly motivated to succeed. The very good student-staff relationships are held in high regard by students, who are quick to commend staff for 'going the extra mile'. Students make a very strong contribution to the academy and wider community, for example by providing therapeutic treatments for elderly hospital patients, performing 'The Phantom of the Opera' at the Royal Norfolk Show, and raising money for charity.
- Students feel very safe in school. Close attention is paid to safety issues in lessons. Students say that bullying is very rare and is dealt with firmly. They are aware of different forms of bullying and feel confident that they can report any problems to staff. Their knowledge of cyber-bullying and the potential dangers of social networking is well developed because the academy has focused strongly on this issue with students, parents and carers.

- Attendance has improved considerably since the academy opened and is now above average. Concerted work with poorly attending students and their families means that very few students are persistently absent. The Victory Academy Support Team skilfully coordinates pastoral care.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal is an outstanding school leader with a deep understanding of schools and the systems needed to lead and manage them. She has won the hearts and minds of students and staff alike, inspiring them to aim high. Her approach has been to plan for sustainability of the outstanding features of the academy. She has built an exceptionally capable team of senior leaders, who constantly strive for improvement.
- Senior leaders monitor and evaluate the academy very rigorously, paying close attention to every detail and taking prompt action to tackle any potential areas of weakness. They are not satisfied until a problem is fixed. The impact of action plans is checked carefully and further action is taken where necessary to achieve the required improvement.
- For example, an analysis of the academy's 2012 examination results showed that most groups of students and most subjects were very successful, but that there were a few cases where progress was only average. The progress of the most-able students, of students on GCE AS level courses and of students in mathematics and modern foreign languages have all been successfully targeted for improvement this year. There is strong evidence of improvement in all these areas.
- Leadership is strong at all levels. Subject leaders are self-motivated and take full charge of their subjects, driving forward improvements in teaching and learning. They support academy-wide programmes, such as improving literacy and numeracy. They set high standards for their subject teams. Subject leaders are gaining external recognition through their involvement in local and national projects.
- The academy has well-established programmes to support students who have fallen behind but its primary strategy for improving students' results has been to teach them all well in the first place. The academy has internalised the principle that 'only good is good enough'. The leadership of teaching is very strong. New staff are rapidly inducted into the Victory way of doing things, with its very high expectations.
- Existing staff undergo regular and rigorous checks on their teaching, leading to professional development tailored to their needs. Some of the strongest teachers have been encouraged to gain higher professional qualifications or to take part in action research. Teachers only receive pay increases if they are effective teachers.
- Students experience rich and relevant learning programmes, often personalised to their individual needs, which make a major contribution to their outstanding achievement. The academy engages strongly with parents and carers to involve them in their children's education. Information, advice and guidance for students at points of transition are very strong.
- Each aspect of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Students are given opportunities to develop their own leadership skills, for example through the STEM leadership award, which accredits young people for leadership skills through science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- All students work towards a broad range of GCSE subjects. The programme is enhanced with a

highly successful range of vocational courses. For example, students can choose courses in catering, beauty, performing arts and child care that provide a hands-on approach to learning. Business studies students set up their own commercial enterprises.

- The enrichment programme is very strong. Some students are given challenging work experience opportunities through the academy's link with the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. The sports programme is very strong, including competition in a range of individual and team sports. The academy is working with schools from five other countries on environmental issues.
- The academy uses its expertise well to promote better education beyond its own doors. It is supporting several primary and secondary schools in Norfolk and Suffolk. Liaison with the local cluster of primary schools is strongly developed. Some teachers are working with colleagues in higher education, for example to develop learning resources in science or to support teacher training. The Principal contributes to a national programme for school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The academy benefits from a very strong governing body, which expects and obtains high levels of performance from the Principal and, through her, all members of staff. Governors are closely involved with the academy, challenging every aspect of its work to ensure high performance and strong personal development for students. The governing body has a direct impact on students, for example by urging the academy to expand its sports provision and to provide a Duke of Edinburgh Award.
 - The governing body has established an effective committee system to scrutinise different aspects of the academy's work in detail, including the impact of the Pupil Premium funding. It ensures financial probity and fulfils its statutory obligations very well. It has been influential in securing support from the Ormiston Trust to ensure that the new building programme does not deflect senior leaders from maintaining excellence.

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	136186
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399813

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	788
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Prior
Principal	Rachel de Souza
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01603 742310
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