

Press release – On The Wight 25th June 2021

More than half of Cowes Enterprise students heading to Russell Group universities, including Oxbridge

The CEO of Ormiston Academies praised the head teacher and her team saying they have transformed the school and are creating opportunities which the students are seizing



A secondary school that was rated by Ofsted as failing just seven years ago is now sending more than half of its students to world-leading Russell Group universities, including Oxbridge.

[Cowes Enterprise College](#), on the Isle of Wight, was placed in special measures by Ofsted in 2013 when known as Cowes High School.

Dramatic turnaround

Soon after, the school became an academy and joined Ormiston Academies Trust and since then the school has been transformed. Ofsted re-inspected the academy in 2017 and rated it as Good in all areas.

The dramatic turnaround is most clearly demonstrated in the number of students now going to world-leading universities.

80 students received offers

This year, of the 80 students in the last year of sixth form at Cowes Enterprise College, just over half (43) have received offers from Russell Group universities. Of those, one has secured a place to read Archaeology at Cambridge, another has an offer read Politics at Oxford, and a third has an offer to read Medicine at Bristol.

It was a similarly positive picture last year, when 29 (out of 52) Year 13 students received offers from Russell Group universities, with two winning places to read Medicine (at St George's medical school at the University of London and at the University of East Anglia) and one securing a spot at Oxford to read History and Politics.

Onward journeys

Overall in the last three years, students at Cowes Enterprise College have gone on to Selwyn College, Trinity Hall College, Peterhouse College, and Gonville and Caius College (all Cambridge); St Hugh's College and Merton College (both Oxford); while six students have left to read Medicine at leading universities.

Other students have secured places at Loughborough, Imperial College London, King's College London, University College London, Bath University, Warwick University, Southampton University, Birmingham University, Bristol University, Exeter University and Leeds University.

Students also win highly prized apprenticeships

Rachel Kitley, who has been Principal of Cowes Enterprise College since 2017, said,

“We are so proud of all our students for their achievements. Those who go to Oxbridge or Russell Group universities make the headlines, but we also have students who win highly prized apprenticeships with leading employers or go straight into great jobs.

“Our role as educators is to help our young people do as well as they can, fulfil their potential and be as well-placed as possible to be successful in the next stage of their lives. Our staff have done a fantastic job in helping to make that happen.

“Since the school joined Ormiston Academies Trust, our brilliant staff have instigated a real step-change in our ambitions for our young people, and our students and their parents have really bought into it – they know how good they are, and how good they can be.”

Hudson: Rachel and her team have transformed the school

Nick Hudson, Chief Executive of Ormiston Academies Trust, said,

“Rachel and her team have done a superb job over the last four years. They have transformed the school and are creating opportunities which the students are seizing.

“Our mission as a Trust is to make the biggest difference for students, both inside and outside the classroom, and we want to provide a first-class education to all our children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“It’s been wonderful to see this enacted at Cowes Enterprise College.”

News shared by Ormiston Academies Trust in their own words. Ed

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