

All Saints Academy Dunstable

Houghton Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5AB

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Serious weaknesses

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across all subjects and year groups.
- The quality of teaching is variable; not enough teaching is good or better. In some lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The school's feedback policy is not consistently used by pupils and this slows down their progress.
- The behaviour of some pupils disrupts the learning of others in lessons.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully effective. Some do not have the skills to lead their departments well.
- Despite current initiatives by leaders, the proportion of pupils missing school through absence or through fixed-term exclusions is above the national average.
- Students' achievement on academic courses in the sixth form was below the national average in 2016. There is evidence of improvement for current students, but it is too soon to be confident of the impact of recent developments on outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the previous inspection, the new headteacher's clear vision and leadership has re-energised other leaders. Consequently, the pace of improvement has quickened. They are now taking more effective actions to meet pupils' needs.
- The newly formed leadership team demonstrates strong capacity to improve the school. They have made many important changes to the school's work but many of these have yet to reveal their full impact.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe and parents agree.
- The governing body has become more effective over the last year. Members fully support the headteacher, providing effective challenge to her, and the senior and middle leaders, in order to be confident the school is improving.
- The information, advice and guidance given to pupils are effective in helping them to make decisions about next steps in their education, training and employment.
- The curriculum is good as it meets pupils' needs. It is broad with a substantial range of subjects provided across both academic and vocational areas.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - providing all middle leaders with the support and challenge they need to lead their areas of responsibility effectively
 - ensuring that teachers consistently follow the school's behaviour policy
 - ensuring that teachers improve the consistency of using the school feedback policy
 - ensuring that students on academic courses in the sixth form accelerate their learning.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations and plan learning that appropriately challenges pupils of all abilities
 - reduce the difference between the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Increase attendance by:
 - building on recently introduced strategies used to reduce absence, particularly for the disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher has set a clear vision for school improvement. Through rigorous determination she is now bringing direction and raised expectations of both staff and pupils. As a result, the capacity of leadership continues to improve. The school no longer requires a category of concern. The school is now improving rapidly and continues its journey to being a good school.
- The headteacher is addressing the issues highlighted in the previous inspection report. Consequently, senior leaders are raising the quality of teaching. However, it remains variable in some subjects. Leaders now take prompt action when the quality of teaching has not met their new and high expectations. Pupils' achievement is improving where the quality of teaching is stronger.
- Most middle leaders are not yet fully effective. This is because some of them have not had the opportunity or been provided with the necessary skills to lead their subjects well enough. Many middle leaders are ambitious for improving performance in their subjects and there is a growing capacity within this team to move the school forward.
- Several teachers with key leadership roles are new. It is too soon for them to have had a clear impact on school improvement.
- Leaders now have an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching across the school. Where necessary, teachers have been provided with support and there is now a range of training in place. Teachers are clear about their responsibility for improving pupils' rates of progress.
- Senior leaders share an ambition to improve the school further. They set aspirational targets for pupils and communicate high expectations to both staff and pupils.
- Leaders have put in a robust system for tracking pupils' progress and provided additional interventions for pupils that are not meeting their targets.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of most pupils. There is a wide range of subjects on offer and most pupils enjoy their option choices from Year 9.
- Performance management is now used to hold staff to account rigorously. Upper pay scale teachers are given whole-school responsibilities.
- Most staff feel proud about working in the school. They welcome the recent opportunities for training and professional development. Teachers who are new to the school spoke highly of the quality of their induction and support.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent wisely. It enables pupils to play musical instruments and engage in school trips, as well as make progress in their learning through enrichment activities. These actions have improved disadvantaged pupils' progress, but not enough to eradicate the difference between how well they do compared to other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Leaders ensure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to raise standards of literacy and numeracy for those pupils arriving in the school with lower than average attainment in English, mathematics or both subjects.

- The majority of leaders model positive attitudes and values. They consistently promote fundamental British values and there are many opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both within the curriculum and via after-school enrichment activities.
- Senior leaders are working determinedly to increase the school's partnerships with parents. Parents evenings are well attended, and a detailed newsletter is published each month. Parent responses indicate that they want more information about their child's progress and for the school to make sure that pupils are well behaved.
- The sixth-form provision is improving, although it is not yet good. Academic achievement remains below the national average. However, recent initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes in the sixth form are beginning to pay dividends.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has changed the way that it works since its last inspection. There is a greater degree of analysis when looking at information provided by the school.
- Governors have become much more robust in linking pay to teachers' performance.
- Governors have an astute understanding of the school's areas of strength and areas for further development. They use the academy improvement plan to hold leaders to account and have a clear understanding of the rate of improvement.
- Planned meetings and regular visits enable governors to have a good understanding of the school's day-to-day work.
- Governors have not been robust enough in checking that all policies are up to date.

Safeguarding

- Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe in school and there are people they could go to if they had a problem or concern. They were able to discuss the actions they could take to stay safe online. They said that bullying is tackled quickly if it does happen.
- All staff are aware of their role in ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. They have had up-to-date safeguarding training. Child protection policies are clear and understood by staff.
- Processes and procedures for the recruitment of staff are compliant with current legislation.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Resilient leadership has tackled weak teaching. Inadequate teaching is no longer tolerated. Teachers are supported with relevant professional development in order to improve their practice. However, although external validation and this inspection confirm that teaching, learning and assessment have improved considerably over the past year, the quality of teaching remains too inconsistent.

- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good enough across all subjects, or within subjects such as English, to secure good progress for all pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes in class are not always receptive to appropriate learning, particularly when teaching is weaker.
- Teachers do not apply the school's feedback policy consistently. Inspectors saw examples of unfinished work and pupils had not responded to teacher requests to complete it. Feedback is being used increasingly well by pupils to improve their understanding in history and geography.
- Much teaching in mathematics, geography and history is effective and improving. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Pupils' engagement is generated because teachers in these subjects use resources well to stimulate discussion and deepen understanding.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving across the curriculum. Where learning is at its strongest, teachers ensure that tasks are at the right level for pupils.
- Where teaching is most effective for disadvantaged pupils, questioning is used well to probe and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Pupils take pride in their work, more so at key stage 3 than key stage 4. There is too much acceptance of poor presentation by older pupils.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately to support pupils across different subject areas.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects in different year groups, supporting their literacy development.
- Pupils regularly read in school. The most able readers are provided with challenging texts and tackle complex words with confidence. The pupils who are reading at levels below age-related expectations try to sound out words. Discussion with pupils confirmed that reading for pleasure is given a low priority.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are provided with a programme of activities for form time. This includes achievement, attendance, rewards, bullying, understanding the behaviour policy and learning about respect. During form time, some pupils are not focused and engaged. Some low-level disruption goes unchallenged.
- While a wide range of out-of-lesson activities are available for pupils, leaders are not always clear on who attends them and therefore cannot monitor for equality of provision and take up by different groups of pupils.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils say that they feel safe at school and a large majority say that bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

- Pupils have opportunities to understand how to stay safe. They receive regular information on how to keep themselves safe online, are taught about the risks attached to using social media, and the use of phones in school is prohibited.
- Careers guidance is well organised and effective. Pupils say how much they value the time taken by all adults to help them with decisions and choices they make about their future lives. They particularly value the bespoke careers advice and guidance that they receive. As a result, almost all continue in education, training or employment when they leave school at the end of Year 11 or Year 13.
- The school site is well kept. It is very secure and supervised well. Pupils respect the learning environment. There is no graffiti or litter around the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Parents have valid concerns. The school recognises that behaviour is still not yet good.
- The school's revised behaviour policy, introduced in November 2015, has raised expectations of behaviour. This initially resulted in an increased number of incidents that required the support of a senior leader. The improved level of teaching and the assistance button is now beginning to reduce the number of call-out incidents.
- Movement between lessons is purposeful. Inspectors found that a small minority of pupils arrive late to lessons and to school. Leaders are working to reduce this by monitoring repeat offenders.
- The use of derogatory language is rare in lessons and around the school. At breaktime, pupils were respectful to staff and to their peers.
- Low-level disruption in lessons too often prevents pupils from making the progress they should. Although there is a behaviour policy, it is not consistently applied by staff. Pupils say that behaviour in class varies depending on the teacher and they find the disruption to their lessons frustrating.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils' behaviour is more positive because they are interested and challenged by their work, which means that they are able to focus more effectively.
- Attendance remains below the national average and persistent absence is above average, particularly for the disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are applying new strategies to reduce poor attendance.
- The level of fixed-term exclusions is high compared to the national average. This is because exclusions are being used as part of a combination of strategies to improve the behaviour expected in the school. Older pupils say that behaviour is beginning to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Many pupils enter the school at Year 7 with achievement that is significantly lower than that of other pupils nationally.

- The provisional information on Year 11 performance for 2016 suggests that pupils' overall progress was significantly below average, but less so than in previous years.
- Better teaching and the improved management of behaviour, coupled with higher expectations, are now leading to enhanced progress for most pupils. Regular testing and analysis of assessment information are giving senior and middle leaders a clear picture of how well pupils are doing.
- A robust approach to assessment is now driving up standards. Pupils currently in Year 11 are making better progress than their predecessors. Assessment information demonstrates that pupils' progress is rising.
- Strong monitoring and interventions to support all pupils are ensuring that differences in the overall achievement of disadvantaged pupils, compared to others with similar starting points, are diminishing. However, they do not attain as well as other pupils nationally.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils are also capable of achieving more than they currently do. This is because not all teachers provide sufficiently challenging work that really stretches them to achieve the highest grades.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are steadily improving as the identification of their needs and the quality of care and support provided for them become more effective. The improvements are most evident in key stage 3, but more time is needed to see the full impact of recent initiatives.
- In 2016, progress in post-16 academic courses was below average and in line with national expectations for vocational courses. More detailed tracking is now targeting achievement.
- In lessons and when scrutinising books, inspectors found that the majority of pupils now make better progress over time compared to the previous year.
- More time is needed to raise standards further, due to the legacy of poor teaching.
- Pupils who completed Year 11 in 2016 nearly all progressed to the school's sixth form, further education or work-related training programmes. The proportion of pupils not in education, employment or training is below the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision so that their specific needs can be met. This is well monitored by staff. Pupils attend regularly. The school receives termly progress reports. Pupils make progress slightly below that of their peers.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The recently appointed head of the sixth form is providing strong and purposeful direction, recognised by the governing body and sixth-form students. One student commented: 'The new head of sixth form is running it efficiently'. Nevertheless, these changes have yet to reach fruition and fully impact upon the achievement of students following academic A levels.
- In 2016, students on vocational courses made progress that was at least in line with that made by students nationally; those on academic courses did not achieve as well. Academic students now have target grades that are aspirational in order to achieve in line with the national average.

- The new head of vocational education ensures that students follow vocational courses that build on their prior attainment. One vocational student commented: 'The teachers seem more energised; they are challenging us a lot more.'
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is improving. In the lessons where learning is strongest, students are challenged by the work that is set and supported by their teachers. This means that they make good progress.
- Sixth formers are provided with sufficient guidance as they prepare for examinations and appropriate support in making applications for higher education, employment and training. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the world of work.
- Leaders make an effort to ensure that courses meet the needs of students upon entry, and retention rates for Year 12 going into Year 13 are improving as a result. Nonetheless, numbers of students transferring into Year 12 from Year 11 remain low.
- Leaders ensure that students who enter the sixth form without English or mathematics at GCSE grade C or above are well provided for in the sixth form, which is helping them to improve their grades.
- The conduct of sixth formers across the school is admirable and they act as good role models for younger pupils. Sixth formers are mature, respectful and ambitious and are complimentary about the lessons they attend.
- Relationships between staff and students are positive. Students are able to seek support and help. They value the advice they receive from staff.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form and students say that they feel safe.

School details

Unique reference number	135946
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10023362

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	710
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Fraser
Principal	Liz Furber
Telephone number	01582 619700
Website	www.allsaintsacademydunstable.org/
Email address	office@allsaintsacademydunstable.org
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium and the curriculum on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the pupil premium and the curriculum.
- The headteacher was made substantive in September 2016 following a period as acting principal from November 2015.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It converted from an upper school to an 11–18 school in 2013.

- The school became an academy in 2009 and is co-sponsored by the University of Bedfordshire and the Diocese of St Albans.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is in line with the national average and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision for six pupils in Years 8 to 11. These pupils attend Dunstable First Place Training and The Academy of Central Bedfordshire.
- A section 8 inspection of religious education took place in November 2011.
- The school met the government's floor targets (the minimum targets that schools are expected to achieve) in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 34 lessons in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, walks around the school were conducted with members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders to observe what the school provides and pupils' learning. Inspectors attended tutor periods and mock examination entry to the hall, visited the library and observed pupils' conduct around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, senior leaders, middle leaders, the school's improvement adviser, several groups of pupils and a group of newly qualified and recently appointed staff.
- A phone call was held with the director of education for the Diocese of St Albans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to policies; the minutes of governors meetings; strategic planning documents; safety; self-evaluation documents; pupils' achievement; behaviour and attendance information and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the school's own survey results and the views expressed in 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Leonard	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Osagie	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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