

All Saints Academy Dunstable

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 135946 |
| Local Authority | N/A |
| Inspection number | 381974 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 October 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | David Jones HMI |

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

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Academy |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 13–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 503 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 85 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Wallace |
| Headteacher | Tom Waterworth (Principal) |
| Date of previous school inspection | N/A |
| School address | Houghton Road Dunstable LU5 5AB |
| Telephone number | 01582 619700 |
| Fax number | 01582 619701 |
| Email address | office@allsaintsacademydunstable.org |

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 54 lessons taught by 48 teachers. Meetings were held with the Principal, nominated staff, members of the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors observed the academy's work, looked at a wide range of documentation and reviewed 114 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. A total of 109 student and 40 staff questionnaires were evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment and achievement secured, with a particular focus on the progress made by students in English and mathematics.
- The improvements secured in attendance and the reduction in persistent absence in recent years.
- The impact of teaching on students' learning and progress.

Information about the school

All Saints Academy opened in September 2009 in the buildings of the predecessor school. The academy is sponsored by The Diocese of St Albans and The University of Bedfordshire. Specialisms are science and business skills for work. The academy is part of a three-phase school system and students are aged from 13–18. The academy is seeking re-designation as an 11–18 establishment.

The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The large majority of students are White British, and the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is less than half the national average. Few students are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students registered by the academy as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national figure, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. A small number of children in the academy are looked-after by the local authority.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Since the academy opened, much has been achieved, notably in raising attainment, improving behaviour, raising attendance and significantly lowering persistent absence. Five of the seven outcomes that relate to the Every Child Matters agenda are good. These include: the enhancement of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the extent to which they feel safe; and their positive contribution to the community. Students' questionnaire returns were very positive about feeling safe and the quality of pastoral care provided. As one young person noted, 'There is always a member of staff to help you.'

Attainment has improved considerably from the predecessor school and the unvalidated 2011 GCSE results were just above the government's 'floor' targets; these are the minimum standards expected for secondary schools. The rising results confirm that students' progress is improving securely and quickly and is satisfactory overall. In particular, students are making better progress in English and mathematics because of improved teaching in these subjects. Results in science and business and enterprise, the academy's specialisms, have improved, as have outcomes in the performing arts and health and social care. Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress because teaching and support is effective in meeting their learning needs. The small numbers of students from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds progress as well or better than their peers.

In the best lessons, the students' current learning and progress are improving further. However, in lessons where teaching failed to develop the students' learning effectively not enough emphasis was placed on developing subject-specific literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, not all students were consistently involved in their own learning. Students of all abilities responded well when they were engaged and challenged by the tasks provided. The use of assessment to enhance teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, teachers do not always use the assessment data they have available and the target setting for students in Years 10 and 11 is not always derived from the useful standardised data available within subject areas. Evidence from this inspection confirms the findings of the academy's thorough monitoring of teaching and learning. Marking is satisfactory but it is not consistent within subject areas.

As a result of intervention by senior staff, the curriculum opportunities provided are

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now broadly satisfactory although the variations in the quality of provision within subjects are reflected in the examination results of different departments. The humanities curriculum includes very little geography and too few students are involved in learning modern foreign languages.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and have been the driving force behind much that has been achieved. The improvements in behaviour, attendance and punctuality have been impressive, with senior and pastoral staff forming an effective team. Staff as well as parents and carers expressed positive views on the leadership of the academy and all staff are proud to work there.

Curriculum leadership is more varied and middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes in their subjects. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate while the evaluation of teaching and learning is a strength. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Governance is good and the working arrangements between the sponsors is effective. Successful partnership working with local schools has smoothed the transition arrangements for students who come from a variety of middle schools. Similarly, the academy provides support in information and communication technology (ICT) for a number of feeder schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure further improvement in teaching and learning by involving curriculum leaders in monitoring both the teaching and learning in their subject areas.
- Further improve attainment and students' progress in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring subject-based literacy and numeracy is enhanced in all subjects
 - ensuring marking and assessment are used consistently to enhance learning and progress.
- Improve the use of assessment by:
 - ensuring teachers make consistent use of the range of assessment data available.
 - spreading the most effective practice in the academy.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry varies significantly. In 2011, the proportion of students who gained five higher GCSE grades including English and mathematics was just above the government's baseline targets for the first time. The average points scored by students in their best eight examination courses improved significantly to a point just

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below the national average. Improving progress in English and mathematics is helping students quickly to make up lost ground.

In six out of ten lessons observed, students made good progress. Outcomes are strongest where there is a clear focus on what the students are expected to learn and when they respond well to this challenge. In an outstanding science lesson on electricity, the teacher had carefully planned a wide range of activities about electrical circuits. Students were engrossed in the tasks and their behaviour for learning was excellent. They demonstrated a very clear grasp of currents and voltage within good peer group discussion. Similarly, in an outstanding Year 10 English lesson, students made exceptional progress because they were required to work together from the outset. Resources were carefully chosen to engage those who often find learning difficult. Questioning and direction derived from the teacher’s very strong subject knowledge and drove forward the learning. However, there are not enough of these very strong lessons to address fully the weaknesses in the students’ prior learning.

Students, parents and carers are very positive that students feel safe in the school and inspectors observed very good relationships between staff and students that support this view. The school strongly encourages students to adopt a healthy lifestyle. A wide range of healthy school meals is available and the proportion of students engaged in sport is rising. The students’ contribution to the academy through the student leadership group is strong and they value the impact of their ideas on academy life.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils’ attainment ¹ | 4 |
| The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils’ behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils’ attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Students made good progress in the majority of lessons, but in the remainder, progress was hindered by the lack of clarity within the tasks set or the pace and challenge of the work. Where opportunities for students to participate were limited, they often became quietly disengaged.

In the best lessons, teachers provide good resources and use their good subject knowledge to plan activities that motivate the students and enhance their enjoyment. In many cases, this includes the use of ICT, for example data projectors and interactive whiteboards. In these lessons, challenging tasks help all students to make progress and peer group discussions help deepen their understanding. Relationships are positive. Where learning is less successful, some common features are observed. Some tasks have too low a level of challenge for some students, for example when all students are expected to complete the same tasks. In these weaker lessons, teachers do not give individuals sufficient opportunities to collaborate and discuss their work. This limits opportunities for students to express themselves in oral exchanges and written tasks.

Most teachers use assessment information to plan the tasks for students and use a satisfactory range of assessment strategies to check students' understanding as the lesson proceeds. However, not all subject leaders or individual teachers use the wide range of assessment data available for older students to best effect. Occasionally, lengthy whole-class question and answer sessions slow the pace of learning for groups of students, particularly those who are less confident in volunteering answers.

The curriculum is satisfactory; the reorganisation of science courses, one of the academy's specialisms, has been important to the improvement in attainment and achievement in 2011. The impact of the English curriculum has helped to raise attainment, but the mathematics curriculum is not as successful and inconsistencies in provision remain. There are variations in the quality and extent of subject provision in design and technology and the humanities, and weaknesses in the development of subject-based literacy skills remain in most subjects.

The pastoral support for individuals is highly regarded by students, their parents and carers. For example, effective pastoral work has enabled students from a range of middle schools to work together in a way that they find surprising and positive. The support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities has helped them make satisfactory progress overall. This often relates to effective support from teaching assistants for lower-ability groups and a better match to these students' learning needs than often seen. A few students have been nurtured back into education from persistent absence related to complex personal situations. As a result of effective care and the school's engagement with parents, attendance has risen and is broadly average.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team has done well to develop a calm working environment where mutual respect between teachers and students is evident. The Principal has set a clear agenda for the academy and is driving improvement. There are strengths in leadership at most levels, although there remains variation in the impact of curriculum leaders on the monitoring of provision and attainment. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are strong features of leadership. Senior staff were invited to accompany inspectors in the joint observation of teaching: the views they expressed concurred with the judgements given by inspectors. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Governance is good, with a clear focus on enhancing provision at every level. The governing body has taken appropriate action to manage a complex budgetary situation and the academy's new build is progressing rapidly. Safeguarding procedures are good, with strengths in staff recruitment and training and the success of efforts made to support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Engagement with parents and carers is good: the effectiveness of the pastoral support programme would not be possible without positive dialogue with parents and carers.

The academy's partnership working is good. A constructive relationship with a local group of feeder schools has emerged from the support the academy provides to its local community. Community cohesion is satisfactory, with an appropriate focus on rebuilding the academy's reputation within its community. Senior staff and the governing body deploy resources effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

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| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Sixth form

The academy has developed a very small sixth form where individuals have gained notable personal successes. Overall attainment is below average, however, most students make at least satisfactory progress and some have done well given their starting points.

The sixth form has been actively inclusive and satisfactorily led, given the developments required since the academy opened. During this inspection post-16 teaching was satisfactory, although some strong lessons were observed. Students comment that they have been well supported by regular progress reviews and feel that provision and guidance have improved in the last academic year.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 3 |
| Taking into account: | 3 |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 3 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive that their children enjoy school and are safe, views supported by a similar proportion of students. Similarly, the large majority are pleased with the progress their children are making and the leadership of the academy. However, nearly a quarter of the responses received noted that the academy could do more to help parents and carers support their children’s learning. Similarly, a fifth of the respondents had concerns regarding healthy lifestyles, many voiced concerns about the cost of school meals.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at All Saints Academy Dunstable to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 588 students registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 31 | 27 | 73 | 65 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 33 | 29 | 76 | 67 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 27 | 24 | 67 | 59 | 12 | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 27 | 24 | 67 | 59 | 12 | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 17 | 15 | 76 | 67 | 10 | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 19 | 17 | 60 | 53 | 25 | 22 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 15 | 13 | 71 | 63 | 21 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 21 | 19 | 71 | 63 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 23 | 20 | 72 | 64 | 11 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 29 | 26 | 61 | 54 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 22 | 19 | 60 | 53 | 11 | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 29 | 26 | 62 | 55 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 33 | 29 | 67 | 59 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2011

Dear students

Inspection of All Saints Academy, Dunstable, LU5 5AB

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you during the recent inspection. The inspection team was impressed by your behaviour and the efforts you have made to improve your attendance. You were keen to tell us how much you valued and respected the support you receive from staff.

The academy has improved steadily since it opened. We were pleased to see that the academy's last set of GCSE results was much higher than the previous year. We were also pleased to see that, because teaching is getting better, you are making faster progress in many of your lessons. In summary, we judged that the academy's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The Principal and other leaders know that more remains to be done, and we agree. I have asked the academy to further improve teaching by providing more opportunities for you to develop your understanding of the subject-based vocabulary and numeracy skills important to your success. I have also asked that marking and the use of assessment are improved, so that you learn more consistently.

I hope you will all help the academy to progress still further by building on the improvements in your behaviour and attendance and continuing to try your best in lessons.

I look forward to hearing about your future success.

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

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