

St Augustine Academy

Oakwood Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8AE

Inspection dates

December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching requires improvement. Weak teaching in some lessons means that some students do not learn as well as they should and do not make good progress.
- Some students do not have sufficient opportunities to learn independently and develop resilience. Opportunities are missed for students to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Some students who are eligible for the pupil premium have previously fallen behind, particularly in mathematics.
- The curriculum has been designed carefully to meet the needs and interests of current students. However, in Year 7 and Year 8, some students are prevented from studying a modern foreign language.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Students in the sixth form do not make good progress in some subjects in relation to their starting points and abilities. Monitoring of students' progress in the sixth form is underdeveloped.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving academy. Senior leaders have high expectations of what students can achieve. They know whether the actions they are taking to improve teaching are helping students to reach higher standards.
- The Academy is a welcoming community where students are encouraged to respect each other, regardless of their differences. Behaviour is good and students say they feel safe.
- The Academy Trust and advisory board are driving continuous improvement through accurate and regular checking of the academy's work. Members ask challenging questions and have an accurate view of the Academy's strengths and weaknesses.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, looked at students' work, attended pantomime rehearsals and presentations, listened to students reading and talked to them about their work.
- They held a conversation with the Chair of the Advisory Council, representatives from the Woodard Academies Trust and academy leaders and managers. They also held discussions with several different groups of students.
- They discussed professional development, safeguarding, performance management and the effectiveness of teaching and learning with teachers and other staff. Joint observations of lessons were conducted with senior leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, improvement planning and the monitoring of teaching. Inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance and analysed the academy's student attainment data.
- Inspectors also took account of 23 questionnaires completed by school staff, recent academy student surveys and 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Robert Ellis, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Paula Sargent

Additional Inspector

Janet Morrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Academy opened in September 2011. When its predecessor school, the Astor of Hever School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010 it was judged to be good overall. The Academy is sponsored by Woodard Schools.
- The Academy is a small secondary school with a smaller than average sixth form. It has specialisms in business and enterprise.
- Around one in eight students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is government funding targeted to support pupils entitled to free school meals, children in local authority care and children with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. Most of these students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or moderate learning difficulties.
- Three quarters of the students are White British and the remainder come from a variety of different minority ethnic groups. Most students speak English as their first language.
- The Academy's recent unvalidated GCSE results met the government floor standard, which is the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students attend a local college, another local school or a local skills centre as part of their programmes of study.
- Governance of the Academy is the responsibility of the Woodard Academy Trustees and their representatives on the Academy advisory council.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - consistently promoting students' skills in thinking for themselves, learning independently and developing resilience
 - accelerating the pace of learning so that all students are sufficiently challenged, particularly in the sixth form
 - using information about the achievement of sixth form students effectively to ensure that all sixth form students reach their challenging targets
 - developing the curriculum so that all students in Key Stage 3 have equal opportunities to learn a modern foreign language.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When students join the Academy, many are working significantly below the nationally expected standards for their ages in most subjects. Students' literacy levels are particularly low.
- Students' progress is accelerating and the proportion who is currently making expected progress is broadly average.
- The proportion of students achieving at least five GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is below the national average.
- GCSE examination results since the academy opened show that some groups, particularly students who have special educational needs and received support at the school action plus level, did not achieve their full potential and made less progress than would be expected, taking account of their starting points and abilities. The academy has addressed this issue and current students are making better progress.
- Recent changes to the way students who have special educational needs are identified and supported have ensured that these students are now making better progress.
- Within the Academy, gaps in average point scores, a measure used to compare overall GCSE attainment between all the different groups of students, including minority ethnic groups, those who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who have disabilities and/or special educational needs, are closing. However, for students eligible for the pupil premium, the gap remains wider than that which is found nationally, particularly in mathematics. The academy monitors these groups closely and it is taking effective steps to support their learning, particularly in relation to improving reading.
- Students are entered early for some GCSE examinations. Those who are successful in gaining the higher grades then concentrate on subjects in which they have been less successful. It is too early to judge whether this has a beneficial impact on students' performance.
- Students in the sixth form do not achieve as well as expected. There is considerable variation in outcomes across the different courses

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving, but there are elements of weaker teaching which prevent it from being good or better overall.
- Nevertheless, recent improvements mean that students now get good teaching in the majority of their lessons and they respond well to interesting and challenging tasks.
- In the lessons that require improvement, teachers spend too long explaining and do not allow students enough time to do their individual work or to work together. Consequently, they do not practise their skills and develop their understanding and this limits their learning. These lessons are often undemanding and the pace of learning is too slow.
- The marking of students' work is usually helpful in telling the students how to improve. Some students have opportunities to review their own work and that of others. This helps them to develop their independence and ability to judge their own performance accurately. However, this is not yet a common feature of all lessons.
- Weaker students get extra help in reading and writing and they are making much better progress in developing their literacy skills. Development of their mathematical skills has not been given as much additional support and, consequently, progress is slower.
- Teachers can measure the progress that students make and swiftly address any underachievement because they carry out regular and well-organised checks. Most teachers ask searching questions so that they can help students develop their thinking and know how much they have understood.
- In some lessons, the most able students are not given enough opportunity to tackle challenging

problems which require them to think for themselves. Students often rely on adults for help and teachers have only recently begun to enable them to work by themselves. Some students lack the confidence needed to contribute to whole-class activities or to seek help when it is needed.

- Students are sometimes given good opportunities to discuss what they are doing with a partner or in a group. This enables them to articulate their ideas and practise their communication skills. In some lessons these opportunities are missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most students behave well in lessons and around the Academy. They generally treat others with appropriate respect and courtesy. Students say that they feel safe and that adults will help them overcome any difficulties they might experience.
- Although most students display positive attitudes to learning, a small minority are passive in lessons and often depend on prompting from adults to keep them working at the right pace. Consequently, these students do not develop sufficient resilience and independence, skills that are important for their future success.
- Attendance has improved. Most students come to school regularly and are punctual. Attendance for this year is above the most recently available figure for the national average.
- Most parents, staff and students judge behaviour to be good. As behaviour has improved, the number of incidents which have resulted in students being excluded from the academy has fallen significantly. Students are confident that the rare instances of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.
- The Academy's very positive and supportive ethos promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A good range of trips, visits and other enrichment activities, often with a business and enterprise focus, helps to build their confidence and self-esteem. During the inspection a large number of students participated enthusiastically in pantomime rehearsals. Other students showed due courtesy and consideration when welcoming visitors from a partner establishment in France.
- Students understand about how to deal with risks they might face and have a good understanding of issues relating to substance abuse and dangers associated with using the internet. The Academy provides a secure social networking site which students can use to communicate with each other and their teachers.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders check and judge the Academy's work accurately and use the information to identify what has worked well and what needs further improvement. They have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching and the standards achieved by students are starting to improve rapidly.
- Strong performance management ensures that leaders at all levels and trustees scrutinise teaching particularly thoroughly and check the extent to which improvements in teaching are leading to improvements in the standards that students reach. All teachers have performance targets that are linked to the Academy's improvement goals and pay scales.
- A small number of students are able to have their choice of subjects by attending lessons at a local college or at a local skills centre. This use of alternative teaching is effective and enables students to pursue their particular interests, particularly those that lead to a vocational qualification. The academy is developing its partnership arrangements with another local secondary school to provide greater choice in the subjects that can be studied in the sixth form.
- Those students in Year 7 and Year 8 who have low prior attainment in English have limited opportunities to learn a modern foreign language because a significant part of their timetable is given over to developing their basic skills in reading, writing and communication. Consequently,

if they do choose to study a language from Year 9 onwards, they are at a disadvantage.

- The Academy has developed good and productive partnerships with other schools, colleges and local and international businesses and with education, care and health professionals to support students' learning and personal development. Lead Practitioners, commissioned by the Academy Trust, have been used well to develop aspects of leadership and management in the Academy and support improvements to teaching.
 - Regular checks on students' learning ensure that leaders are able to judge students' attainment and track their progress. This works well in Years 7 to 11, but the data for sixth form students are not gathered as consistently and this makes judging sixth form progress less reliable.
 - The Academy's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and adults who work with the students receive regular and appropriate training in safeguarding.
 - Parents who responded to Parent View or who contacted inspectors have few, if any, complaints. The academy is working closely with parents to keep them informed and help them to support their children's learning. Parents value the support they receive and the academy's parent consultation evening held during the inspection was well attended.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The Academy trustees monitor all aspects of the academy's work and they are well informed about its strengths and weaknesses. Trustees and their representatives on the Academy advisory board ask challenging questions, analyse performance data and hold senior leaders to account for improving the Academy. Trustees look at how well the different groups of students are doing and keep a close check on what is being done to improve teaching and learning, for example by keeping a careful check on the impact of the use of pupil premium funds on pupils' performance. They are not reliant on information provided by the senior leaders but commission Lead Practitioners to undertake a thorough annual review of the work of the Academy. They also provide improvement advisers and consultants to work alongside the Academy staff to aid improvement.
-

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	136923
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	399878

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	610
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Crosbie
Principal	Peter Midwinter
Date of previous school inspection	NA
Telephone number	01622 752490
Fax number	01622 693789
Email address	office@saa.woodard.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

