

All Saints Academy Dunstable

Houghton Road, Dunstable, LU5 5AB

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The proportion of students making the progress expected of them is close to the national average but too few of them are making good progress to rapidly improve standards.
- The gap between the attainment of students eligible for the pupil premium and other students is closing, but not as quickly as it could be.
- Standards have risen steadily over the last few years but the results of GCSE examinations are still below average in English and mathematics.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The results achieved by sixth form students are below average.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Students are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons. The most able students do not do as well as they could.
- The effectiveness of marking varies. It is not always detailed enough to help students to improve their work.
- Governors and leaders have brought some improvement to the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress but recent changes in personnel have slowed the momentum in securing further improvements.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, but do not always use the information they collect well enough to bring further improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and safety in lessons and around the school are unfailingly good and students are very polite.
- Teachers' questioning in lessons is often good.
- Attendance has risen since the previous inspection, exclusions have fallen and students are punctual to school and to lessons.
- Students are very proud of their school. They enjoy and benefit from the responsibilities they are given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 34 lessons or parts of lessons, of which four were observed jointly with members of the academy’s senior leadership team.
- Inspectors examined information on students’ progress. They examined students’ books. They spoke with students around the school at break and lunchtime, and held discussions with students in all year groups.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Principal and senior staff, including staff responsible for subjects and for the pastoral care of students. They met with three of the academy’s governors, and held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority, with a consultant who has been working closely with the academy, and with representatives of the academy’s sponsors.
- They took account of 67 responses to the staff questionnaire, and 27 responses to the on-line survey (Parent View) as well as a small number of comments submitted directly by parents.
- They looked at key documents, including the academy’s self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, information about safeguarding, performance management documents and records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Lewis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Macfarlane	Additional Inspector
Julie Goddard	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All Saints Academy Dunstable is smaller than the average secondary school. It is in the process of changing from educating 13 to 18 year-olds to the full secondary age range of 11 to 18 years. The first group of Year 7 students was admitted to the academy in September 2013. At the time of the inspection, there were students in Year 7, and in Years 9 to 13.
- The principal sponsors of the academy are the Diocese of St Albans and the University of Bedfordshire.
- The academy has specialisms in science and in business skills for work.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy is in receipt of the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and other groups.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average. Few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who are supported by school action is close to the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There are no students educated off-site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making better use of assessment and marking to help students to understand how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve
 - matching work in lessons more closely to the needs of all students, including those in the sixth form, and especially the most able.
- Accelerate the rate of students' progress, especially in English and mathematics, in order to:
 - increase the proportion of students making better than expected progress
 - raise standards to be at least in line with national averages
 - narrow the gap between the performance of those eligible for the pupil premium and that of other students.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - robustly holding teachers to account for the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring pupils make good progress in all subjects
 - helping governors to make more rigorous use of data to monitor improvements in teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not enough students are making good or better progress. The proportion of students making the progress expected of them increased in 2012 and is now close to the national average but improvements are not fast enough to rapidly raise standards.
- Standards have risen steadily over the last few years but the results of GCSE examinations are still below average in English and mathematics. Despite a slight dip in 2012, English results show an upward trend since the previous inspection. Students do not do as well in sciences and design and technology as they do in other subjects.
- The attainment of those students who entered the academy in Year 9 was below average. Students' performance in their best eight subjects at the end of Year 11 has improved, and school data show that in 2013 it was close to the national average. Students who were entered for GCSE early have not always performed as well as they could. As a result, this practice has now been discontinued.
- Students follow a broad range of courses in the sixth form. They achieve a 100% pass rate in most subjects but overall attainment in the sixth form remains below average because not enough students are awarded high grades.
- Comparisons between groups of students show that most make the progress expected of them. However, the progress of the most-able students lags behind that of other students.
- Students for whom the academy receives additional pupil premium funding are given the support they need so that, from lower starting points, they nearly all progress as well as other students. The gap between the performance of these students and others is slowly narrowing. In 2013, these students were working at levels just under six months behind other students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are appropriately supported so that their progress is similar to that of other students.
- Standards of literacy for the newly arrived Year 7 are broadly average. The academy promotes a culture of reading every day. Sixth form students are proud to support this reading programme, and targeted support through the catch-up programme. 'Big Writing' makes sure that no-one falls behind as they start school. Standards in numeracy, for this group, are broadly average and do not present a barrier to learning as they start at the academy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Although much of the teaching is good there are too many lessons where teaching requires improvement.
- The work the teachers set for the students is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able. Sometimes teachers present students with tasks that do not make them think hard in order to solve problems for themselves. Consequently, their progress is not as fast as it could be.
- Marking does not make a strong enough contribution to students' learning. During the

inspection, several groups of students were seen whose work was not marked in sufficient detail to help them to improve. Teachers do not provide students with clear guidance on how they can improve their work. In addition, some students do not know their targets.

- In the sixth form, teachers bring good subject knowledge to their lessons, but do not always work at a fast enough pace or high enough level for these advanced students. Where teaching is most effective the teacher makes students think deeply. For example, in a practical chemistry activity the teacher challenged individual students by making sophisticated links between different areas of the subject.
- Some good and occasionally outstanding teaching was seen in both English and mathematics lessons. In these lessons, students were challenged to think for themselves. Carefully targeted questions were directed to individuals to ensure that they were fully engaged and, as a result, learning effectively and making good progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are identified at an early stage and support is available for them when necessary. However, teachers do not always adapt their lessons promptly enough to ensure these students make good progress.
- Teachers form good relationships with their students. Students are clear that they enjoy lessons. In a well taught Year 11 English lesson, for example, questioning led to a high level of engagement with the work on a Shakespeare sonnet. High expectations meant that students, including those eligible for the pupil premium, made good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. They are unfailingly polite to adults and to each other. No oppressive behaviour was seen or inappropriate language heard during the inspection. Students are very enthusiastic about the new building, and say that the pleasant environment in which they work makes a huge contribution to their improved attitudes to learning.
- Attitudes to learning in lessons are good. Students are usually curious about their work and only where the teaching occasionally fails to capture students' interest does behaviour begin to slip. Parents confirm their children's view that the academy looks after them well and keeps them safe, and that the academy deals effectively with bullying.
- Students are proud of their academy, and are keen to take on responsibility in supporting literacy skills for younger students, as sports coaches and as prefects. They speak enthusiastically about the school council and are working to improve its contribution to the academy's work.
- The academy has been effective in promoting regular attendance, which has risen sharply since the previous inspection and is now close to the national average.
- The academy is very supportive of students who find school difficult. It has been very effective in promoting the good behaviour seen around the building, including in situations in which students are not directly supervised. The chaplain makes a good contribution to the development of students' ability to make choices, particularly those about their behaviour.
- The academy's zero tolerance approach to smoking resulted in a high incidence of fixed term exclusion. The policy has been effective and exclusions are now decreasing.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the monitoring of key areas of the academy's work, notably teaching, the use of marking, and the match of work to students' needs has lost momentum, as a result of staff changes.
- Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, but not robustly enough, for example, to improve marking so that all teachers use the same approach. Discussion with senior and middle leaders and with teachers shows that the monitoring of teaching is not always followed up rigorously enough. Consequently, not all teachers implement the improvement points they have been given with the same rigour.
- The academy has a system for managing the performance of teachers. However, this too has not been fully effective in securing consistent approaches to teaching. For example, there is still too much variation in the way assessment is used to make sure that the most able students are always made to think hard in lessons.
- Pupils, parents and staff alike confirm that the academy has improved since the previous inspection. They strongly support the work of the governors and the Principal. The Principal, leaders and managers, at all levels including those in the sixth form, are strongly committed to the success of the academy.
- The academy's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and this was well illustrated during the inspection. Leaders observed several lessons jointly with inspectors resulting in a high level of agreement about the quality of teaching between senior leaders and inspectors.
- The curriculum is broad although it is not always modified well enough to meet the needs of different groups. The academy provides many opportunities for students to extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by working together on sporting and cultural activities. Students respond well to the cultural and social activities that the academy provides, and appreciate cultural activities, such as performances in drama, dance and music.

The governance of the school:

- The academy is governed by two principal sponsors, who are also members of the governing body. Sponsors visit the academy regularly, in order to gain a first-hand knowledge of the academy's performance although they are not making full use of the data to check the quality of teaching or monitor progress. They bring a very impressive range of expertise to bear on the management of the academy. They are aware of the barriers to further improvement, and set challenging targets for the Principal. They are fully aware of the link between pay and performance but have not, so far, been effective in supporting the academy's use of performance management to improve teaching. The academy's finances are well managed, and within budget. Pupil premium funding is well managed and its impact monitored. They ensure that statutory requirements, in respect of safeguarding, are met.

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	135946
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	425333

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	707
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Wallace
Principal	Tom Waterworth
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
Telephone number	01582 619700
Fax number	01582 619701
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