

Ansford Academy Trust

Maggs Lane, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7JJ

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal has effectively led a process of improvement at the school. She has established a good standard of behaviour and learning for pupils, and her high aspirations for the future of the school are clear. The principal's leadership is highly regarded by governors and teachers.
- Governors and senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They work purposefully and effectively to make improvements for pupils.
- Teachers know the pupils they teach as individuals. They are increasingly planning learning to better meet pupils' needs. However, the most able pupils are still not routinely challenged highly enough.
- Pupils make good progress and engage well with their lessons. However, some teachers do not always use assessment well to identify and tackle pupils' misconceptions.
- Middle leaders in the school are increasingly effective at raising standards of teaching in their departments. Teachers learn from each other to develop their practice. Their current focus on improving the level of challenge for the most able pupils is in its infancy and the impact is yet to be seen.
- Almost all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They wear their uniform smartly and take pride in all they do at school. Pupils are happy to come to school and feel safe when they are there.
- Pupils are prepared well to move on from Ansford. They are taught both about life in modern Britain and what it means to be a 'global citizen'. All pupils are provided with individual advice about their next steps in education and their possible future careers.
- For some pupils, attendance at school is too low. School leaders have taken steps to improve attendance but the effect of these steps is limited.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - engaging effectively with all parents to establish the importance of high attendance at school and its link with progress
 - carefully analysing the attendance patterns of different groups of pupils in the school over time so that intervention can be more accurately targeted and evaluated.
- Further improve the consistency of teaching and assessment by:
 - continuing to share the best practice in teaching across the school so that all teachers plan to fully challenge the most able pupils in their lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the school's assessment policy so that pupils are not left with incorrect knowledge or misconceptions in the topics covered.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal has a clear vision for the school that is rooted in the success of all pupils. She has communicated this well, and works effectively to improve all aspects of the school's performance with drive and ambition. As a result, suitably high standards of teaching and behaviour are established across the school.
- The principal and other senior staff have actively developed a group of strong middle leaders in the school. Members of this group greatly value the individualised professional development and support that is provided for them on an ongoing and regular basis. They are able to clearly articulate the improvements that the principal has made since her appointment, and are fully on board with the recent initiatives and policies that have been established.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Leaders have developed a curriculum in Years 7 and 8 that the school believes will equip pupils to become successful learners. The principal and her staff used the idea of the 'Ansford graduate' to consider the knowledge and skills each pupil needs at the end of Year 11, then used this description to design the appropriate learning for each year group. Year 8 pupils report that they find their curriculum engaging and challenging. They are able to describe their progress in learning and how they are monitored and supported in school.
- Pupils value the 'Ansford Extra' programme of clubs and enrichment activities offered after school and at lunchtimes. A wide range of sporting and non-sporting clubs and activities are on offer at these times.
- The principal has put in place an appropriately rigorous performance management system for all staff. Teachers are set targets to ensure that they develop their practice in the classroom and that describe suitably ambitious outcomes for the pupils they teach.
- Teachers share good practice with each other in a structured way, providing training for each other. School leaders analyse the strengths and weaknesses of teaching as part of the performance management process. Following this analysis, leaders then arrange for good practice to be shared in order to address the identified weaknesses. Middle leaders indicate that this work is raising the standards of teaching in their departments.
- School leaders have developed the curriculum to ensure that pupils are suitably prepared for life in modern Britain. Work on British values, democracy, and the rule of law is taught effectively in tutor time as well as on collapsed timetable days. In personal, social, health and economic education lessons, pupils are taught about the dangers of radicalisation and valuing diversity.
- The school is part of the Somerset Challenge partnership. This initiative encourages Somerset schools to collaborate in order to raise achievement for all pupils in the county. For example, support from another school in the partnership has been effective in helping to raise standards in modern foreign languages.
- The principal knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. She and other

leaders have taken action to deal with the weaknesses identified, and this has had a positive impact in most cases. For example, following GCSE results in 2016 that were lower than expected in modern foreign languages, adjustments were made to the curriculum. Additionally, staff have been provided with coaching specifically tailored to their needs. Pupils are now making better progress as a result of these actions.

- While school leaders have taken steps to tackle low attendance at the school, patterns of attendance for different groups of pupils in the school are not routinely analysed. As a consequence, the impact of the strategies used to support attendance is not evaluated as fully as it could be.
- The school uses additional funds to support Year 7 pupils effectively, carefully planning the additional support and then evaluating its impact. Funds are used to develop reading, writing and mathematics for those pupils who need to catch up with their peers.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide a well-judged balance of support and challenge for the principal. They are aware of the challenges she has faced since her appointment and fully support the steps that she has taken to move the school forward. The principal works closely with governors so that the evaluation of school performance and the work done to improve it is well understood by all. Governors have put an appropriate and challenging performance management procedure in place for the principal which is clearly focused on pupil outcomes.
- All governors have a good knowledge of how effectively extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used by the school. For example, governors were able to precisely describe how the funding is used, how the impact of the spending is evaluated, and the changes that have been made as a consequence.
- Governors are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have all received up-to-date training in this. Governors are active in seeking other appropriate training for their roles, including using their own expertise to provide training for each other. As a result, they are well placed to work collaboratively and function as an effective group.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and all its pupils. They fully understand their strategic role and have the expertise to make well-informed decisions about the future direction of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are trained appropriately in safeguarding practice. Records indicate that staff have read the most recent guidance documents and are fully confident that they know how to deal with concerns that arise.
- Pupils feel safe in their school. Pupils spoken to by inspectors stated that they know whom they can go to if they have any welfare concerns. They are confident that any issues will be dealt with effectively. The attendance officer ensures that all absences

are checked each day so that the school has information about the whereabouts of all pupils.

- Responses to Parent View indicate that over 90% of the parents that responded strongly agree or agree that their child feels safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are positive and encouraging of all pupils in the groups they teach. Good relationships underpin purposeful and focused learning so that time in lessons is used productively. Any low-level disruption is dealt with quickly and effectively so that learning continues without interruption. Pupils take pride in what they do in lessons, aiming to complete work that is presented well and reflects their ability.
- Increasingly, teachers plan lessons that take account of the different starting points within their groups. School leaders have planned opportunities for teachers to share the strategies they use to help ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged, and have made this a key priority for all subject departments. However, the most able pupils are not yet being sufficiently challenged.
- Middle leaders have ensured that the new curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is designed to enable pupils to meet the suitably ambitious expectations leaders have set. Pupils understand the targets that are set for them and aspire to achieve and exceed them. Year 8 pupils, who are the only year group to experience both the 'old' and 'new' curriculum arrangements, indicated that they are challenged by the work set for them. They are motivated and enthused by the teaching they receive.
- Senior leaders worked collaboratively with all teachers to develop the school's assessment policy. The policy clarifies the type and frequency of feedback that a pupil in the school can expect in each subject. Not all teachers follow the policy, so it is possible for pupils to make mistakes and develop misconceptions without being corrected. Not all middle leaders and their line managers are effective in monitoring the feedback given to pupils in their subject, so practice across the school is inconsistent.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are positive about the teaching their child receives at the school, with more than three quarters of respondents indicating that they consider their child to be taught well and making good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders are aware that attendance needs to improve and have taken steps to tackle this. Work with individual pupils and their families takes place and the school considers the needs of individuals carefully, working closely with parents and outside agencies whenever possible.
- The school works actively with the education welfare officer and other external

agencies to support families and individuals in overcoming issues that prevent attendance at school. The school employs an attendance officer who makes contact with parents as needed on the first day of a child's absence so that reasons for the absence are established. Despite these measures, attendance remains below the national average.

- Pupils feel safe in their school. They enjoy coming to school and understand whom they can go to if they have any concerns. Pupils stated that bullying is not a concern for them, and that if bullying incidents occur they are dealt with well by teachers.
- A small number of pupils are educated in alternative provision. School leaders receive regular information that enables them to monitor the welfare and progress of these pupils. Consequently, leaders know that these pupils are being supported to make good progress.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe online and understand the dangers associated with exchanging photos and other information on the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show pride in their school and respect the school uniform. They almost all move calmly and sensibly around the building between lessons and at social times, behaving politely to each other and to visitors. When the rare incidences of loud or boisterous behaviour occur, these are dealt with effectively by the teachers on duty.
- Almost all pupils are well behaved and attentive in lessons, and relationships between teachers and the groups they teach are positive. If pupils do not behave appropriately, teachers consistently apply the school's agreed policy of warnings and sanctions.
- Teachers indicate that the standard of behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved in the time since the principal has been in post. They value the open-door policy of both the principal and other senior staff, and have confidence that they are fully supported if any behaviour concerns arise.
- Behaviour is particularly strong in the lower years of the school. These pupils exhibit exemplary behaviour in their lessons, take pride in their work, and enthusiastically demonstrate and explain the progress they are making.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school with attainment in line with the national average and go on to make progress in line with other pupils nationally. The overall progress score in 2016 was in line with average for boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils overall make progress in line with the national average in English and mathematics. This is also the case for groups of pupils who enter the school with different levels of prior attainment in Year 7. In science, progress was also in line with the national average overall in 2016, and was significantly above average for pupils in the middle prior attainment group.

- School leaders are not complacent about the outcomes of the school and take steps to remedy any areas of underperformance. From the 2016 GCSE results, progress in languages was recognised as a weakness. As a result, support from another school with a strength in language teaching was put in place. This led to readjustment of the curriculum and additional monitoring of progress in the department. School leaders have now analysed the performance of current year groups and it is in line with other subjects across the school.
- School leaders monitor the progress made by pupils currently in the school by collecting assessment information from all subject areas. Information about current Year 11 pupils indicates that they are making progress in line with pupils who completed GCSE exams in 2015 and 2016.
- Teachers set targets for pupils to attain in Years 7 and 8 that are of increasing difficulty. The targets are named bronze, silver, gold and platinum. Pupils understand the learning required for each target and are involved in setting their own target. They can negotiate higher targets if this is appropriate. Tutors check that targets are suitably ambitious and challenging for their pupils. Information about progress is clearly communicated so that parents and pupils understand where pupils are on track and where they are falling behind. Pupils state that they find the new target system motivating and challenging.
- The majority of work seen in pupils' books indicates that pupils make progress as expected. Work is almost always completed and presented well. Teachers return work to Year 7 and 8 pupils if it is below the standard indicated by the pupil's target so that it can be done again. As a result, a consistently high standard of expectation is being established.
- An independent careers adviser works with the school. For example, theme days use representatives from further education, apprenticeships and higher education to ensure that pupils are well informed and suitably prepared for their next steps. Work experience is arranged for Year 10 pupils, and the careers adviser interviews all Year 11 pupils to ensure that they are ready to move on when they leave Ansford Academy.

School details

Unique reference number	136839
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10024993

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Appropriate authority	Ansford Academy Trust
Chair	Chris Culpin
Principal	Shonogh Pilgrim
Telephone number	01963 350895
Website	www.ansford.org.uk
Email address	shonogh.pilgrim@ansford.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ansford Academy is a smaller than average secondary school.
- The school participates in the Somerset Challenge programme.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall, although higher than average in Year 7.
- Three pupils are educated off-site, either at the Mendip Link Education Centre or the Mendip Partnership School.

- The school met the current government floor standards in 2015.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 25 lessons, most of which were visited jointly with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the principal, chair of governors and then with a larger group of governors. Meeting were also held with staff responsible for safeguarding arrangements.
- Further meetings were held with the middle leaders in the school, with newly qualified teachers, and with individual staff with oversight of specific areas of the school's work.
- Inspectors took into account 125 responses from Parent View as well as the views of staff. Inspectors also considered correspondence from parents.
- Separate meetings were held with Year 7 and Year 8 pupils plus a group of pupils from Years 10 and 11. Inspectors visited tutor time and observed pupils at social times and lesson changeover times throughout the day.

Inspection team

Jerry Giles, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Colledge	Ofsted Inspector
Michele Chilcott	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Thompson	Ofsted Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2017