

Magna Academy

Ashdown Close, Adastral Road, Canford Heath, Poole, Dorset BH17 8RE

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils make excellent progress from the time they join the school right through until they take their GCSEs. Standards are consistently high across the school. Pupils achieve well in virtually every subject they take.
- Almost half of pupils achieved a good pass in both English and mathematics GCSE in 2018. This is significantly higher than the national average despite the school having a lower than average ability intake.
- Standards of literacy are very high across the school. Pupils read regularly and widely. They are encouraged to find out about the context and background of the books they are reading. Standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are high.
- The quality of teaching is consistently very high. Teachers are very well trained and think carefully about the tasks they set pupils. The result is that pupils are given work that challenges them and helps them to gain knowledge rapidly.
- The principal and senior leaders are extremely ambitious for their pupils. They have created an atmosphere where every pupil understands the importance of working hard and being resilient.
- Pupils' conduct is very good. They treat each other with warmth. They are respectful towards adults. Disruption in lessons is very rare.
- The standard of discipline expected by the principal is very high. Pupils say it is 'very strict'. Most parents are supportive of this approach, but a minority feel it is inflexible. Some parents have removed their children from the school while others have been attracted to the school as a result of its distinctive approach to discipline.
- The small sixth form is changing in character from one that previously focused on vocational subjects to one that puts a greater weight on A levels. In this period of transition, progress in the sixth form is lower than in key stage 4 but standards are improving.
- School leaders work hard to match the school's high levels of challenge with high levels of support. They are usually successful. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make rapid academic progress. However, in a small number of cases some pupils do not get all the support they need.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in the sixth form so that they match those found across the rest of the school.
- Improve the leadership and management of provision for pupils with SEND so that every pupil receives all the support they need to thrive.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and his senior team are very ambitious for pupils. They are passionate about improving the achievement of everyone. They are absolutely committed to ensuring that pupils leave with the qualifications and personal qualities that will allow them to be successful in their future lives.
- The school's impressive results are built on combining that commitment with a very carefully thought-out strategy. All school policies and practices work together very closely and support each other. The school's success is built on how well this jigsaw supports the aims of the school's leaders.
- The principal ensures that there is complete clarity about the school's aims and ways of working. No one, from leaders and teachers through to pupils joining the school, is under any doubt as to expectations of them. This ensures that school systems are consistent and firmly embedded.
- Leaders' approach to behaviour is a central feature of the school. Leaders have focused on eliminating disruption for the classroom so that teachers and pupils can focus on learning. They have been largely successful. This is because of the consistency with which it is applied by all teachers.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong. Leaders and teachers share a commitment to a curriculum based on rapidly developing pupils' knowledge. Leaders work hard with teachers to provide a range of excellent opportunities to develop their teaching techniques. Teachers are well supported and coached. This results in a very high standard of teaching that is consistent across the school.
- Leaders' approach to improving literacy is a good example of their strategy to develop teaching and raising standards. They recognise that many pupils join the school with low standards of literacy and that this is a barrier to future success. They have developed a strategy that includes a number of coordinated strands. Pupils read a set book in class daily, and this is linked to follow-up homework. Teachers also give pupils opportunities to read together in classes. All teachers follow the school's policy by feeding back to pupils on their spelling, punctuation and grammar regularly. As a result of this consistency and focus, standards have risen markedly and pupils are able to experience success in other subjects more easily.
- Middle leaders are highly effective in taking the school's teaching and learning strategies and implementing them appropriately for their subjects. This is a key factor in ensuring the consistency of teaching across the school.
- Leaders pay close attention to the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils in key stage 4 enjoy a broad range of choice of GCSEs. There is a suitable balance of subjects, with opportunities to study vocational and academic options. Leaders build in more time for literacy and numeracy for those in key stage 3 who need it. This does limit the time available for other subjects, but pupils say they feel they benefit from the targeted help they receive.
- Leaders are quick to review and revise their systems and structures when they feel they are not delivering what they need. For example, last year they reorganised how

they provide pastoral support. They introduced year heads, to make sure pupils were given the support they needed. This has improved the quality of support that pupils receive.

- School leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. There is a good balance of support for disadvantaged pupils so that they can take part and achieve as well as their peers. As a result of the support they receive, this group of pupils make excellent progress. Leaders also use the funding available to support Year 7 pupils who need to catch up effectively. They have implemented a very focused support programme of learning for these pupils. The early signs of this approach are that it is developing the skills pupils need quickly.
- The leadership of teaching for pupils with SEND is in transition, with new leaders taking over responsibility for this area. Overall, this group of pupils do make very good progress with their academic work. However, there are some instances where pupils' needs are not being met as consistently as they should.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust to which the school belongs monitors the work of the school closely. Trust leaders are experienced and knowledgeable. They are focused on ensuring the school is successful. Trustees receive regular reports from senior leaders and ask searching questions. They deploy their own staff to support and challenge leaders further.
- While holding school leaders to account rigorously, trustees are keen to ensure that the school is able to develop its own individual character. This careful balance between accountability and the autonomy of school leaders is playing a significant part in the success of the school.
- Members of the local advisory board (local governing body) also support the work of the school by providing feedback to school leaders from their regular visits and discussions with pupils, parents and staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. There is a clear and well-embedded culture of safeguarding across all sections of the school. Staff are well trained and know what to do should they have concerns about the safety or well-being of a pupil. Pupils are confident that staff keep them safe. They know whom to go to should they feel they want help or support.
- Leaders recognise that there are a significant number of pupils who need additional support because of the challenges they experience in their lives or because they face mental health challenges. School leaders have invested heavily to ensure there is good support from a team that includes a counsellor and staff with social care experience.
- The school carries out all the necessary checks on adults before they are able to work with pupils; risk assessments are appropriate and records are well kept.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils are making excellent progress in almost all subjects because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are universally high. Teachers across all subjects expect pupils to absorb knowledge effectively and then make links to previous work. Pupils respond to the challenge and, consequently, make rapid gains in their knowledge.
- Pupils are making progress because of the consistency of challenge and the regularity and precision of assessment. Teachers assess pupils' strengths and misconceptions and then they plan their lessons skilfully so that they build on pupils' current knowledge and understanding. They introduce challenging ideas and then provide the support pupils need to become familiar with them.
- Teachers provide detailed feedback to pupils, often verbally, to help them improve their work. Both pupils and teachers work together to ensure that the feedback has an impact on the pupils' future work.
- The school's focus on a strong work ethic is visible in every classroom. Leaders' and teachers' mantra that hard work and persistence payoff is reinforced throughout the school. As a result, pupils are diligent, and their resilience grows over time.
- Teachers plan carefully to ensure the curriculum they deliver builds pupils' knowledge effectively. Each building block is designed to strengthen understanding and reinforce previously introduced concepts. The strength and consistency of subject-team planning is particularly helpful to new and less experienced teachers.
- Teachers and pupils say that the almost total lack of disruption in classes allows teachers to concentrate on delivering the content of the lesson and it allows pupils to focus on their work without interruption.
- Teachers give literacy a high profile. The whole-school focus on reading is supplemented in most subjects by daily opportunities to read and discuss passages and questions, and by an emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar. This approach is particularly effective because it is relentless across the school. The result is that pupils are increasingly confident and articulate and that they are able to express their ideas in well-structured extended passages of writing.
- Teachers are subject specialists who understand their subjects well. They have a good understanding of effective teaching techniques for their subject and they understand the requirements of the examination courses they teach. This combination means that pupils are very well prepared for their GCSE examinations.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from many of the same strengths of teaching and learning as in their earlier years. Learning is well structured and planned and students get precise and helpful feedback to support their progress. Teaching in the applied general subjects has been strong for some years. Now, however, the quality of teaching of A levels is rising to match it as the level of teacher expertise grows.
- Most teachers support pupils with SEND well, and so pupils make good progress. However, there are some inconsistencies and occasions when pupils' needs are not met. When this happens, it is usually because teachers are not sufficiently clear about

the extra support the pupil needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are proud of themselves and their successes. They are smartly dressed and they show pride in the work in their books.
- The importance of persistence and hard work is emphasised throughout the school. Most pupils respond very positively to these messages. The additional opportunities the school provides for extra lessons after the school day or at the weekend are well attended. Even those pupils who find the focus on hard work irksome, accept that it is helping them to improve their knowledge and skills.
- School leaders are committed to increasing pupils' understanding of the world around them so that they can be active and positive citizens in the future. They invest considerable effort in increasing this 'cultural capital' by providing pupils with opportunities in the curriculum and beyond the school day.
- Pupils are friendly and tolerant towards each other. They are respectful of those who may be different from them. They report that racism and homophobia are rare. Friendship groups socialise well at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the real world. Bullying is rare, and pupils are satisfied that, when it does occur, teachers deal with it well.
- Leaders provide a very high level of support for vulnerable pupils. There is a team of well-qualified staff who support pupils with anxiety and other mental health issues. Staff work very closely with local authority social care staff to support pupils, where necessary, so that they can continue to thrive in school.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provider because they are unwell or because they struggle to succeed in a mainstream environment. School staff liaise well with the provider to support these pupils and, as a result, they are able to experience some success.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave very well at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They treat each other well. They have found a good balance between letting off steam and remaining sensible and safe.
- Leaders insist that pupils walk silently between lessons so that they arrive on time and ready to learn at their next lesson. Pupils generally follow this rule diligently. Some pupils, for example some who have special educational needs, feel reassured by the calm atmosphere generated by this approach.
- There has been a relatively high number of exclusions over the last few years. This has

largely been the result of the principal's determination to eliminate poor behaviour and disruption in lessons. And in this, he has been very successful.

- Attendance has improved and is now higher than the national average. The number of pupils who are regularly absent has dropped significantly and is lower than that of other schools. These successes are the result of leaders' characteristic persistence and determination.
- School leaders have made their expectations of the highest standards of discipline clear. They believe it is the bedrock that has led to the high standards that the school now enjoys. Since the principal adopted this approach, standards have risen and the number of pupils on roll has substantially increased. However, some parents feel the approach is inflexible and some have removed their children from the school. This has resulted in higher-than-average levels of pupil movement.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils are making very strong progress and achieving well across the whole range of subjects as a result of the teaching they receive. In 2018, pupils achieved a grade higher in their GCSEs than pupils in other schools.
- Pupils make very strong progress in both English and mathematics. In the past, this has been a relatively weaker area, but the quality of work pupils are now producing is very high. In English, pupils are able to structure their essays appropriately and write with a rich vocabulary. Their ability to solve complex mathematical problems is also of a high standard. In 2018, pupils achieved substantially more in English and mathematics than pupils in other schools, despite having lower-than-average starting points.
- Pupils made strong progress in the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). However, in 2018 the number achieving the Ebacc was below that of other schools because few pupils took the necessary subject combination.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve more than their peers in other schools. The most able reach high standards in all the subjects they take. Lower-ability pupils achieve a grade higher than similar pupils in other schools. Pupils with SEND also make substantially more progress from their starting points than pupils in other schools.
- Disadvantaged pupils make significantly better progress than other pupils in other schools. This is because they attend regularly and receive consistently high levels of support.
- The standard of literacy is high across the school as a result of the school's coordinated approach. Pupils who join the school with lower standards are given the help they need and all pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from the high profile that literacy enjoys across the school.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students in the sixth form are making good progress. The sixth form has a history of students doing well in applied general subjects but making poor progress in their A levels. Progress in A-level subjects is now improving, and students are achieving in line with those in other schools. The quality of teaching has improved. This is because leaders have recruited teachers with the specialist skills to deliver A-level subjects at the required level.
- The few students who join the sixth form without good passes in GCSE English and mathematics are generally successful in improving their grades when retaking them at the end of Year 12.
- Students benefit from a good programme of study that gives them opportunities to experience regular work placements and prepares them well for university. As a result of the support and opportunities they receive, students increasingly have the option to secure high-quality apprenticeships in local industry as well as applying to university.
- Students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers and leaders. Their progress is monitored closely and teachers intervene quickly to support them if required.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very good. Attendance is high and students are resilient and determined to do well. There is good provision for personal and social education within the programme of study.
- There has been a change to the leadership structure in the sixth form this year. Consequently, to tackle weaknesses, there are new systems and initiatives in place that are not yet embedded. For example, students did not feel that the careers advice they were given prior to starting their courses was helpful. The leadership structure is now addressing this. However, improvements are recent and not as embedded as the structures across the rest of the school. The changes to leadership have been warmly welcomed by students, who feel they are already improving the quality of the sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	139711
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10056413

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 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	825
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	72
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Vic Daniels
Principal	Richard Tutt
Telephone number	01202 604 222
Website	www.aatmagna.org
Email address	office@aatmagna.org
Date of previous inspection	9 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average.
- The school is a member of the Aspirations Academy Trust. The trust contains 14

academies, including four in the south west.

- There are 7 pupils on roll who attend 'The Quay', an alternative provision provider. The school also works with other local schools to provide 'managed moves' from one school to another for those pupils in danger of exclusion. Currently there are four pupils on managed moves in other schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act to consider high levels of pupil movement. It was then deemed to be a section 5, full inspection.
- Inspectors observed learning across the range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of local advisory board and trust meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data. They also considered safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders and groups of pupils.
- An inspector spoke with the chief executive officer and deputy of the multi-academy trust, the trust's school improvement officer and the chair of the local advisory board.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with 5 parents in person. They also considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrew Lovett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Maraspin	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Lee	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathy Maddocks	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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.

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