

All Saints Academy Dunstable

Houghton Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5AB

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have successfully made changes and improvements since the previous inspection. However, inspection evidence does not support leaders' view that provision overall is now good
- Although standards at All Saints Academy are improving, pupils are not yet making good progress in key subjects.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too widely. While some teaching is strong, too much is not. Too much teaching fails to interest pupils. This leads to some pupils disrupting lessons and pupils not showing positive attitudes to learning
- Although pupils often behave well, there is more inappropriate behaviour than there should be in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance overall is too low, and persistent absence is too high. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has not improved quickly enough.
- Leaders are overgenerous in their evaluation of the school's progress. Middle leaders are not yet having a strong impact on raising the quality of teaching in their subject area.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are passionate about ensuring that pupils benefit from opportunities to develop well socially and academically.
- Pupils say that they are well cared for. Relationships with adults are strong.
- Pupils benefit from helpful careers information, advice and guidance and so are well informed about the next steps in their lives.
- Leaders' actions to reduce fixed-period exclusions are effective.
- Students in the sixth form are making better progress than their predecessors. They are well cared for and supported to make the right choices. The number of students staying on into Year 13 has improved significantly.
- Governors are increasingly effective in their roles. They hold school leaders to account well.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is well developed through the house system.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders’ drive improvements in teaching and raise standards across the school
 - ensuring that leaders support teachers’ understanding of how to improve pupils’ progress in all subjects and across all key stages.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan learning that stretches and engages pupils and promotes positive attitudes to learning
 - adults have consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils’ work and their behaviour in class.
- Improve pupils’ behaviour and attendance by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, most notably disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND, attend school regularly
 - eliminating incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons
 - raising expectations of pupils’ behaviour around the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have a clear vision for the school's development. Strong leadership from the principal and her senior leadership team has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. However, some inconsistencies remain, particularly in key stage 3 or where recruitment has been a challenge.
- Leaders evaluate the school as providing a good standard of education. The findings of this inspection do not support this view. While outcomes have improved over time, they were very low in key subject areas in 2018. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much, depending on which teacher pupils have. Pupils' behaviour is not yet good enough.
- Recent changes in leadership have enabled the principal to increase the school's leadership capacity to improve further. Senior leaders know what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning. They have focused teachers' training on effective lesson planning, use of feedback to improve learning and use of electronic tablets to engage learners more actively in lessons. This has had some impact.
- Senior leaders have provided effective training and support to middle leaders. This is enabling middle leaders to be more accountable for the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across their subjects. However, middle leaders are not yet making a fully effective contribution to school improvement.
- A number of parents express negative views about the school. Fewer than 50 parents completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Comments parents provided in the 'free-text' service, confirm that parents generally say that their children are happy and well cared for. Where concerns were raised, these tended to be around recruitment. Inspectors found that leaders continue to recruit well when vacancies arise.
- Leaders ensure that the funding for pupils with SEND is spent effectively. Pupils' needs are identified quickly. The right interventions are put in place and monitored carefully.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up premium effectively. Adults and sixth-form students support pupils who find reading difficult to improve. They work with pupils to identify what they find hard and then work with them to improve these things. As a result, these pupils make strong gains with their reading skills.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Funding is used to support a range of strategies including provision of electronic tablets. The electronic tablets enable disadvantaged pupils to access to a range of electronic resources in school and at home to help them with their learning. Funding is also used to support pupils' mental well-being, reducing another barrier to learning. In some year groups, the school's assessment information demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils are now making more progress than their peers and moving closer to others nationally.
- Leaders have made good use of their chosen school improvement partner and the local authority. Together, they have reviewed different aspects of the school's work and provided support to further improve it. For example, work with middle leaders to

develop their leadership skills is beginning to make them more effective in ensuring that teachers are accountable for the achievements of their pupils.

- Leaders are passionate about raising aspirations of pupils. They ensure that the majority of pupils follow an academic English Baccalaureate (EBacc) curriculum. The proportion of pupils following this pathway is much higher than the national average. In addition, leaders ensure that the curriculum provides a breadth of options including vocational subjects such as BTEC sport and health and social care. Pupils say that they enjoy these subjects along with other creative options including music, art and photography.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of expertise to the school and are committed to its success. They are beginning to work more effectively with leaders to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. For example, the governors have contributed to the changes to tutor groups to support improved attendance and the establishment of the Year 7 'nurture group', to help those with challenging behaviour.
- Governors are increasingly holding senior and middle leaders to account. For example, pupils' progress across all EBacc subjects is not consistently good. Through regular 'assessment point' meetings, they challenge senior and middle leaders to demonstrate how school actions lead to improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Governors take effective action to ensure that the school meets statutory obligations, such as performance management, ensuring that the website is compliant and safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Governors keep their safeguarding training under review so that they continue to be well informed and are able to check the school's safeguarding practice.
- Governors have made changes to the leadership structure of the school which have created greater capacity to bring about improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The records of who is safe to work with pupils are complete and well maintained. All necessary checks are made when recruiting staff to work with pupils.
- Leaders ensure that they provide staff with the most up-to-date training and guidance on safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. Therefore, staff are well equipped to raise concerns about pupils.
- The designated safeguarding leader, supported by a team of well-trained staff, oversees safeguarding well. Procedures to raise concerns are well established. Safeguarding matters and the actions taken to resolve them are recorded systematically.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and trust staff to support them when they need help. The majority of pupils say that they know who to go to if they have a problem and that bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils say that the support they are given is one of the things they like most about their school.

- Leaders work well with the relevant external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Therefore, these pupils receive the support they need and are cared for well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent across the school. Strengths in some classes are not replicated in others. The quality of instruction and the tasks planned for pupils do not meet their needs well enough. This means that pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not use assessment information with enough proficiency to plan activities to match the needs and abilities of pupils. This means that some pupils find the work too easy and some find it too hard.
- Some teachers apply the school assessment policy well, providing pupils with information about how to improve their work. However, others do not implement agreed procedures, and not enough teaching is of a good standard.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in key stage 3. They do not do enough to ensure that pupils take care in the presentation of their work or behave well during lessons.
- Too much teaching fails to engage and interest pupils. As a result, some pupils demonstrate negative attitudes. They call out and disrupt learning. They do not follow the instructions of the teacher.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately to support pupils across different subjects. Where pupils are well supported in the Year 7 'nurture group', they make stronger gains in their learning and emotional development.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers are clear about their expectations, and set work that sets suitable challenge. They provide pupils with good feedback about how to improve their work in line with the school's chosen procedures.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are polite and respectful. Pupils told inspectors that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.
- Regular assemblies, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, 'drop down' days and extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' lives and make a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils take part in activities and enrichment days, developing skills and attributes, such as high self-esteem and resilience. Pupils learn about cultural experiences on days such as the Burns Night enrichment day.
- House assemblies develop pupils' understanding of the school's and British values. Pupils know that each of the five houses is linked to one of the values and which one represents their house.

- Careers guidance and advice are well established throughout all key stages. Pupils of all ages learn about the opportunities available to them, about the qualifications and personal requirements needed for future careers and about further learning at college, university or through apprenticeships. All pupils have a work experience placement in Year 10.
- The school uses the alternative provision, Academy of Central Bedfordshire, to provide education for a small number of pupils in Years 8 to 11. The school monitors well the progress and welfare of pupils in the alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve behaviour, and with some success. However, pupils' behaviour in some lessons is still not good and this disrupts the learning of other pupils. Typically, misbehaviour occurs when there are cover lessons or when pupils are not engaged in learning. There is also some poor behaviour around the school.
- Leaders' actions have not had sufficient impact on reducing the levels of absence and persistent absence of pupils. Absence and persistent absence remain higher than they should be, particularly for disadvantaged and pupils with SEND. Pupils with low attendance are taken out of their tutor groups to register and be supported by their head of year or a senior leader. If their attendance improves, they go back to their tutor group. It is too early to see the impact of this initiative.
- In 2018, fixed-period exclusions were high. Leaders have been relentless in their drive to reduce fixed-period exclusions and the number of these has reduced significantly in this academic year. This is as a result of leaders' actions to support pupils with challenging behaviour. Leaders set up a 'nurture group' for Year 7 pupils with challenging behaviour. Small-group teaching, and additional support from adults, has improved the behaviour of these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Many pupils enter the school in Year 7 with prior levels of attainment that are significantly lower than that of others nationally.
- In 2018, the progress that pupils made through key stage 4 improved to be in line with the national average. However, in the subjects which make up the EBacc, pupils' progress was significantly below the national average, as it had been for the previous two years. In some subjects, most notably in English, pupils' progress has improved. However, in 2018 pupils' progress in mathematics and modern foreign languages was in the bottom 20% of schools nationally.
- While the improvements seen in 2018 outcomes have been sustained, pupils continue to make less progress than they should because there is too much variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the EBacc subjects.
- Boys' progress is weaker than it should be. It is below that of girls and below the national average.

- The most able pupils do not make the progress they should in some subjects. Observations of pupils' learning in lessons show that they are sometimes waiting for learning to move on. As a result, they become disengaged and less interested in learning.
- Pupils eligible for support through the catch-up premium in Year 7 make good progress with their reading due to an effective reading programme. Pupils attend two 30-minute sessions each week and are supported to develop their reading ability working with a sixth-form reading partner and a parent reading partner.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving. Leaders have made more precise and effective use of the additional funding for these pupils. In some year groups, the school's assessment information demonstrates that they now make more progress than their peers and are moving closer to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who completed Year 11 in 2018 nearly all progressed to the school's sixth form, other school sixth forms, further education or work-related training programmes. The proportion of pupils not in education, employment or training is below the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is good. Lesson observations show that lessons are typically well planned, students are engaged and respond well to questioning. Students work hard and tasks are well matched to their needs. Students say that the quality of teaching has improved.
- Leaders offer a range of A-level and vocational subjects. Pupils receive effective, impartial advice as they move through key stage 4 to ensure that they choose post-16 programmes of study which suit them. Effective guidance continues through the sixth form to make sure that students make appropriate choices for their next steps in education and employment.
- In 2018, outcomes for A-level and vocational subjects were in line with the national average, with some variation across subjects. The most able students in the sixth form achieve the best possible grades. The school's assessment information demonstrates that students' progress in A-level subjects is rising.
- New leaders in the sixth form are passionate about getting students onto the right courses. Information demonstrates that almost all students will stay on into Year 13 this year. More students are applying and being successful in their applications to Russell Group universities, including Oxford University.
- Leadership in the sixth form is improving at a pace. Senior leaders plan further training to support sixth-form leaders to become even more effective in their roles.
- Sixth-form students dress smartly and are polite and well behaved. They attend well and are good role models for younger pupils. Sixth-form students contribute positively to the learning of younger pupils as reading mentors and sports leaders.
- The progress of students in the sixth form who did not achieve grade 4 in GCSE English and mathematics is good. These students typically make progress in line with, or better than, the national average.

- Sixth-form students are well cared for and supported. Relationships between students and staff are positive. Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form and students say that they feel safe.

School details

Unique reference number	135946
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10088671

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

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	698
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	64
Appropriate authority	The trustees
Chair	David Fraser
Principal	Liz Furber
Telephone number	01582 619700
Website	www.allsaintsacademydunstable.org
Email address	office@allsaintsacademydunstable.org
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2017

Information about this school

- All Saints Academy is a smaller-than-average-sized school. It converted from an upper school to an 11–18 school in 2013.
- The school became an academy in 2009 and is co-sponsored by the University of Bedfordshire and the Diocese of St Albans.
- The governing body of the school is made up of five sponsor governors, two co-sponsor governors, one staff and two parent governors.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school uses the alternative provider, The Academy of Central Bedfordshire, to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school has a small sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 29 lessons throughout the school. Many visits were carried out jointly with senior leaders to gain their views of the quality of teaching and pupils' current progress. Inspectors visited two house assemblies.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, three groups of pupils, and four members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors spoke to the school's improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books in lessons and listened to Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school and improvement plans. They looked at safeguarding records and considered the school's information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the school's own parent survey results, the 47 responses made by parents to Parent View, and the 24 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. In addition, inspectors scrutinised the 42 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils and 38 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Sue Pryor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Cathy Tooze	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Ayling	Ofsted Inspector

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