

Inspection of a good school: Ansford Academy

Maggs Lane, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7JJ

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils are welcomed at this small and friendly school. Teachers know and care for pupils well. Consequently, pupils like their teachers and know who to go to for help.

Most pupils feel happy and safe. However, some parents and pupils expressed concerns about the inappropriate behaviour of some pupils. Pupils sometimes find it difficult to learn because they are distracted by the behaviour of others. Leaders are working hard to improve behaviour. They have clear expectations of what should happen when pupils do not behave appropriately. However, some teachers do not manage behaviour well enough.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), say that they enjoy learning. However, while pupils with SEND are happy to join in, they do not always understand what they are being taught. Teachers do not consistently use effective strategies to support these pupils. Some parents say the school is slow to provide the right support for their child with SEND.

Pupils are offered a wide range of activities outside of lessons. They take pleasure in looking after the school's goats and chickens. They enjoy regular sporting and debating activities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. Subject leaders know what they want pupils to learn and the order in which key content should be taught. Teachers use assessment well to make sure that pupils remember what they learned previously and build upon this so that pupils deepen their understanding of the subject.

Some pupils, particularly those with SEND, do not learn as well as they could. Pupils who are weak readers receive additional support to improve their fluency. However, leaders do not know how effective this is. Therefore, they cannot quickly intervene when pupils are not catching up with their peers. Teachers do not always have enough information as to how to support individual pupils with SEND. However, leaders have secured a wide range of appropriate external support for some pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plans).

Many pupils and parents reported concerns about inappropriate behaviour of pupils, both in lessons and around the school. The school behaviour policies are not consistently implemented and do not have the impact that leaders intend. Leaders, including governors, are aware of the issues. They have put in place a new system for identifying pupils who may have difficulties managing their behaviour and then finding strategies to support them.

Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their wider personal development. Leaders are keen for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. Many pupils are prefects and mentors. These pupils say they enjoy helping younger pupils. Pupils participate in a range of clubs and trips, benefiting from visits to museums in London, participating in local religious celebrations and travelling to France.

The new headteacher, supported by the leadership team, has quickly understood the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has put in place systems designed to improve the school. Staff are extremely appreciative of the support they have been given to manage their workload and concerns during COVID-19.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that pupils' behaviour and attitude and the leadership and provision for pupils with SEND may be a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders in the school are determined to keep pupils safe and ensure that their needs are met. All staff are trained to identify safeguarding issues and know what to do if they have any concerns. As a result of recently improved systems to collect safeguarding information, leaders quickly identify pupils who need support. Leaders work effectively with external services to help get appropriate support for the young person and their families. Many families are very appreciative of the support given to them by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not behave well, and this is not consistently managed effectively. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to learn in lessons. Leaders need to ensure that policies are applied consistently to improve pupils' behaviour.
- Some pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need to be able to follow the intended curriculum. As a result, they do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the needs of pupils are accurately identified and effective support put in place for them.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136839
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10212390
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	596
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Culpin
Headteacher	Rachel Purnell
Website	www.ansford.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ansford Academy is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- 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 pupils with SEND and with an education, health and care plan is above average overall, and increasing for both those with SEND support and EHC plans.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school improvement adviser and with a leader at an alternative provider used by the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector checked the recruitment processes and spoke with the safeguarding leaders. Inspectors spoke with teachers, staff and pupils to gauge their understanding of safeguarding and keeping safe.
- Inspectors considered 121 responses to the questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration 39 staff and 146 pupil responses to the Ofsted questionnaires issued during the inspection.

Inspection team

Deirdre Fitzpatrick, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John White

Ofsted Inspector

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