

Inspection of a good school: Jane Austen College

46-48 Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1DD

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

Jane Austen College continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Jane Austen College make exceptional progress in their learning. From when they arrive in Year 7 right through to Year 13, they build up a rich store of knowledge. Pupils discuss what they know with impressive confidence and maturity. For example, Year 7 English pupils debate how mediaeval texts show the corruption of the church. Year 13 pupils offer fascinating views about how older literary texts explore issues of social justice that resonate today.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well. Pupils praise how leaders and teachers break down learning to exactly suit their needs. They achieve at least as well as their peers, and often better.

Behaviour is extremely positive. Pupils move about the site, an old shoe factory with narrow corridors and staircases, calmly and safely. Pupils speak with passion about how leaders deal swiftly and decisively with rare instances of bullying. Pupils describe the school as a safe, kind and happy environment.

The 'character curriculum' provides a very wide and rich range of opportunities. Many pupils enjoy after-school clubs, such as rock school, dungeons and dragons, and the climate change action group. These opportunities include high proportions of pupils with SEND.

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

Leaders and the trust have a palpable and urgent sense of mission to make the curriculum the best it can be. They see education as the way to improve the life prospects of the more deprived and vulnerable pupils in Norwich. Leaders put the needs and

aspirations of disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with SEND, at the heart of what they do. This contributes towards ensuring that pupils achieve so well.

Leaders show high ambition that all pupils learn what will best help them in their future lives. This is shown, for example, in the very large proportion of pupils who choose the more challenging subjects for GCSEs. It is also evident in the support leaders give to the weakest readers. Leaders make sure that these pupils get whatever help they require to quickly get better at reading. For example, staff give expert phonics support where needed. As a result, pupils in Year 8 who came into school struggling to read fluently now read complex older texts with confidence.

Across the school, leaders, teachers and pupils have a shared language and understanding about the curriculum. Leaders identify the most important things that pupils must learn and then relentlessly ensure that pupils are taught this. Teachers, including in the sixth form, know exactly what knowledge to teach, assess and revisit. They do this consistently and effectively across the curriculum. When teachers have been absent, or are less experienced, the well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils do not experience loss of learning. This rigorous and regular approach helps pupils to understand and remember what they learn. Pupils rapidly build up what they know. A comment from a pupil with SEND was typical: 'It's learning it well that makes it interesting.'

The very clear curriculum structure also helps staff. Teachers say that the clarity of what knowledge they should teach and assess 'massively' reduces their workload. This means they have more time to plan how to ensure that learning meets the needs of their pupils.

Leaders have very high expectations of behaviour. Staff follow the policy consistently and resolutely. Pupils understand where the boundaries are and, as a result, disruption to learning is rare. Pupils from vulnerable backgrounds say that the very clear routines help them feel settled. This enables them to persist when they face difficulties.

The curriculum teaches pupils a deep understanding of healthy and respectful relationships. For example, male pupils discuss with great sensitivity what they have learned about consent. Female pupils say that their male peers treat them with high levels of respect.

Pupils, including in the sixth form, receive well-informed and wide-ranging guidance about their next steps. This means that almost all pupils go onto positive destinations. For example, a much higher-than-average proportion of pupils progress to apprenticeships. The same is true of entry to the most competitive universities.

Trustees and governors have a deep and accurate understanding of the school. They are highly effective in challenging and supporting leaders' work. The trust has worked successfully with leaders to create an effective curriculum. Trustees and governors know that there are still areas to work on to further improve the effectiveness of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a very robust culture of safeguarding. Leaders train staff regularly to spot and log concerns. Staff remember and understand this training.

Leaders deal well with serious safeguarding cases and concerns. They liaise promptly and frequently with agencies as needed, such as the police regarding risks from county lines. Records of cases are thorough. Leaders track intended actions meticulously.

Pupils learn in a safe environment. Leaders have adapted the school building to ensure that it is safe for pupils.

Leaders check pupils feel safe. For example, they ensure that they know about pupils' experience of any peer-on-peer abuse. This means they can respond to concerns immediately.

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 October 2016.

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	140815
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10210983
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1048
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Tibble
Principal	Summer Turner
Website	www.inspirationtrust.org/janeastencollege
Date of previous inspection	18 October 2016

Information about this school

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.

- The principal was appointed as head of school in February 2021, alongside a temporary executive headteacher. She has been appointed as the substantive principal from May 2022.
- Jane Austen College is part of the Inspiration trust, a multi-academy trust of 15 academies based in Norfolk and north Suffolk.
- The school opened in September 2014. At the time of the previous inspection in 2016, it had pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, and sixth-form students in Years 12 and 13. It now has pupils in all year groups from Years 7 to 13.
- The school has a longer than typical school day.

- The school uses one alternative provider for a very small number of pupils on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer of the trust, senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils, and those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trust and the chair of the academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, particularly physical education and modern foreign languages.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record, considered the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, met with leaders and gathered the views of staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the 98 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 90 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 84 responses to the staff survey and the 65 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carole Herman

Ofsted Inspector

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