

Inspection of St Augustine Academy

Oakwood Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8AE

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Augustine Academy is a small, caring school. Leaders' values of courage, compassion and community underpin their approach to education. Pupils enjoy a wide choice of subjects and activities. Their exciting enrichment programme gives all younger pupils the chance to widen their horizons. Activities range from weightlifting to sign language and chess. Parents positively describe these opportunities as 'fantastic'.

Leaders make sure that pupils behave well and are safe. A strong pastoral team gives help to those who need it. The school's Autism Resource Centre (ARC) provides skilled support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are lively, direct and speak their mind. They know that bullying is not tolerated.

Pupils' performance in recent public examinations has been disappointing. Leaders want pupils to learn more and achieve better. There is now a strong training programme for teachers, led by the multi-academy trust. This has led to improvements in English and mathematics but, overall, pupils are not achieving well enough.

Too many pupils have gaps in their learning because they are often absent from school. This particularly affects pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

During the past year, leaders relaunched the school's behaviour policy. They have insisted on more consistent standards of conduct. Pupils have responded well to this and there are now far fewer incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils now behave very well in lessons and around the school. This has helped teachers and pupils to focus on learning.

School leaders have planned a curriculum that is ambitious. Pupils get a broad, interesting choice of examined options at key stage 4. More pupils now take a modern foreign language. This means a greater number will meet the government's national ambition for the English Baccalaureate.

Subject leaders use sound, whole-school guidance to plan what pupils will learn and when. This ensures that topics are taught in a logical order, so that new information builds on what pupils already know. Most departments do this well. Most teachers have strong subject expertise. However, some are less skilled at adapting the curriculum or resources in the best ways to help pupils learn. Sometimes, teachers use resources that pupils struggle to relate to, or draw meaning from.

The school's 'passports' for pupils with SEND ensure that staff are well informed of pupils' needs. These provide helpful guidance about how to meet pupils' social and

emotional needs. However, staff do not currently receive enough guidance about how they can support pupils to learn and remember more. As a result, pupils with SEND are not always supported well enough to achieve their best in some subjects. In contrast, the specialist support for pupils who are still at an early stage of learning to read is effective. These pupils, including many who are disadvantaged, are making swift progress to catch up with their peers.

Teachers routinely give pupils feedback during lessons on how to improve their work. This helps to deal with misconceptions at an early stage. Sometimes, assessments have limited value. This is because they do not link well enough to what leaders intend pupils to learn. As a result, staff are unable to use these effectively to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders have organised training to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. This programme is reducing inconsistency, although it has not yet had impact across all subject areas. Staff value and welcome this investment in their professional development to help strengthen learning across the school.

The school has a well-structured careers programme for all ages. Work experience gives Year 10 pupils insight into life after school. The comprehensive personal, social and health education course promotes a strong sense of citizenship among pupils. Assemblies and the chaplaincy help pupils to reflect on their ideas and beliefs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are experienced and knowledgeable. All staff receive key safeguarding information. They know how to identify or raise a concern. The school carries out thorough employment checks on its staff and makes referrals to outside agencies, when appropriate.

However, not all aspects of safeguarding record-keeping are systematic enough. Sometimes, staff have not recorded actions in enough detail using the school's systems. Leaders' and governors' audits of their procedures had not picked up on the omissions. Therefore, this has the potential for key safeguarding information to be overlooked or missed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The attendance of some pupils is too low, especially for those pupils from a disadvantaged background. This has led to some pupils having gaps in their learning. Leaders should strengthen their recent work to improve attendance, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders, trustees and governors should maintain close oversight of attendance, to ensure that leaders' actions are having the intended impact.

- Staff do not adapt learning well enough to meet the learning needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND are not achieving well enough across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to successfully adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is effective. However, some aspects of safeguarding record-keeping are not systematic enough. This risks important knowledge about pupils being overlooked or omitted. Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to record safeguarding information confidently and accurately using the school systems. Leaders need to maintain oversight of safeguarding records to ensure that all the expected processes are being consistently followed.

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.

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	136923
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296109
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	746
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patricia Pritchard
Principal	Jason Feldwick
Website	www.saa.woodard.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, St Augustine Academy has been designated as a Church of England school, within the archdiocese of Canterbury. It has not yet received its first section 48 inspection.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 10 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school uses three registered providers of alternative provision to support a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held virtual meetings with trustees and members of the local governing body, as well as the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and a representative of the archdiocese of Canterbury. One inspector telephoned representatives of each of the registered providers of alternative provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum 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.
- The lead inspector visited the school's specially resourced provision and met some of the pupils and staff who are based there.
- The lead inspector met the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's single central record of employment checks, relevant safeguarding records and sampled individual case studies of referrals.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during break and lunchtimes, as well as before and after school. They also visited mentor times and school assembly.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, parents and staff, including the free-text comments.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and other relevant information, including from the school's and the multi-academy trust's websites. An inspector also analysed behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Keith Pailthorpe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Taj Bhambra	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023