

Inspection of Ansford Academy

Maggs Lane, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7JJ

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Rachel Purnell. This school is part of the Ansford Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jennie White.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ansford Academy is a welcoming community. Pupils greet visitors with confidence and warmth. Pupils have positive relationships with adults and feel safe in school. Unfortunately, a few pupils do not always show the same level of respect towards each other. Bullying does happen, but when pupils report incidents to adults, they act to resolve them quickly.

The school has clear routines for ensuring good behaviour from pupils. When the school reinforces these high expectations, pupils behave well and engage with their learning. However, behaviour systems are not always applied consistently. This lowers the expectations for pupils' conduct. As a result, at times, the behaviour of some pupils disrupts learning.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership responsibilities within the school. Prefects act as role models for younger pupils and support the running of the school council. Pupils feel listened to when they make suggestions to the school council about how the school could improve. Pupils appreciate the range of extra-curricular clubs and visits that are available. For example, they can represent their school in sport, join the 'Page Turners' writing group, or provide support for the care of the school goats.

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

The school has made changes to the key stage 3 curriculum to ensure that pupils now follow the full breadth of the national curriculum. However, not all subjects have set out exactly what pupils will learn and when. Consequently, pupils learn some areas of the curriculum more successfully than others.

The school has reviewed the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and made changes that have resulted in more pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Pupils enjoy a broad range of courses, such as horticulture and food technology. These prepare them well for future education and employment within the local area.

The assessment methods used do not always enable teachers to know what pupils can and cannot do. Therefore, gaps and misconceptions are sometimes not addressed, and this means that pupils find it harder to understand new content. This hinders pupils in knowing more and remembering more over time.

The school identifies accurately the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers receive the information they need to support pupils with SEND in lessons. However, where all pupils are not learning the curriculum well, pupils with SEND are at a greater disadvantage.

The school understands the importance of reading. A weekly tutor reading session has been recently introduced. Pupils read a range of texts to broaden their cultural understanding. The school library is only available to pupils during English lessons. This limits pupils' ability to select further books for their personal enjoyment. The

school identifies pupils who are weak readers by using assessments of reading age. However, it does not accurately pinpoint the reasons why pupils may find reading a challenge. Consequently, there is not sufficient support provided to help these pupils to catch up and keep up with their peers.

The school values high attendance. The attendance of all pupils is closely tracked and monitored. Personalised rapid support is provided for pupils who do not attend regularly. School attendance is strong, and the attendance of pupils continues to improve.

The personal development curriculum has been carefully planned so that pupils are well prepared for adult life. Pupils learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate manner. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including online. They develop an understanding of tolerance of others and fundamental British values. Pupils receive impartial careers advice, including frequent engagement with employers, visits from guest speakers, trips to careers fairs, and mock interviews. Pupils are clear about the options for future education and employment, including apprenticeships.

The school understands the need to improve the quality of the education provided. It is considerate of staff workload and well-being when planning improvements. However, the school is not checking that the changes it makes are being implemented effectively. This means that some strategies are not having the level of impact that the school intends.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not clearly set out what pupils will learn in all subjects. This means that pupils are not always introduced to topics and concepts in a logical order. This hinders pupils' ability to remember the most important knowledge over time. The trust should ensure that all areas of the curriculum are well planned and ambitious.
- The school does not identify why the weakest readers are not making progress with their reading accuracy and fluency. This means the correct support is not provided to help pupils to catch up and keep up. The trust should ensure that pupils' individual barriers to reading are better assessed. Age-appropriate support should be provided, with regular review, to ensure that pupils' reading improves rapidly.
- The school does not have an accurate picture of which school improvement strategies are being implemented effectively, such as the application of behaviour expectations. This leads to some initiatives not having the intended positive

impact on the quality of education. The trust should ensure that actions to improve the school are more effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136839
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10256628
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	543
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jennie White
Headteacher	Rachel Purnell
Website	www.ansford.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Ansford Academy Trust.
- The school uses two registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met staff and representatives of the trust governance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, and physical education. 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 a sample of work.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the pupil body, including pupils who hold leadership responsibilities.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including minutes of governance meetings and the school's development plans.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans to support pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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