

Inspection of Onslow St Audrey's School

Old Rectory Drive, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 8AB

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 December 2023, and 30 to 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Julie Jones. This school is part of Danes Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Josephine Valentine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Day.

What is it like to attend this school?

Onslow St Audrey's is a welcoming, inclusive school. Pupils from different backgrounds and cultures and with a range of talents and needs form a harmonious community. The school embraces the diversity of its pupils, including the 47 languages that are spoken. Pupils respond well to the school's expectations. Behaviour in lessons is sensible and pupils focus well on their learning. Around the school, pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils who need it benefit from carefully tailored support to help them to improve their behaviour.

In the past, the school has not ensured that pupils achieved as well as they could, including in public examinations. Now, though, a well-designed and well-delivered curriculum is helping pupils throughout the school to make positive progress. The sixth form is growing in popularity. Students are proud of their school. They are studious and ambitious, and good role models for the younger pupils.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to take leadership roles. The learner voice council make recommendations for improving challenge and rewards in lessons, which leaders take seriously. The student council was pleased that its idea for the 'skip the queue pass' was recently adopted. The range of enrichment opportunities is growing and includes football, science club and public speaking.

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

The headteacher has successfully shaped and driven significant changes to the curriculum and the way in which behaviour is managed. In this, she has been well supported by senior leaders and the trust. Staff have both appreciated and made a valuable contribution to these positive developments.

Leaders have thought carefully about their approach to managing behaviour. They have simplified the way in which they communicate their expectations to pupils and parents, and amended how they support staff. There are clear and consistent routines for each part of the school day, which help pupils to know what leaders expect. These changes have had a significant positive impact on pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. In turn, improved behaviour has enabled pupils to focus better on their learning. This is having a tangible impact on their achievement.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders ensure that all pupils now study a wide range of appropriate subjects and take qualifications that prepare them for their next steps in education. Leaders regularly review and improve the subject curriculums based on how well they are working. In most subjects, the curriculum is logically and coherently planned and builds pupils' knowledge well over time. All of this is helping pupils to achieve ever-improving standards in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by subject-related activities that promote learning, raise aspiration and increase engagement with the subject.

Teachers explain subject content clearly. Despite this, sometimes teachers do not check pupils' understanding in lessons well enough. This means that teachers do not always spot when pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are stuck. When this happens, teachers move on to new learning before pupils are ready to do so.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school. The school works closely with primary schools, to help pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary. Leaders know each pupil well, and much of the information they give to teachers about pupils is helpful. However, on occasion, the information does not give teachers precise enough strategies to use in lessons to help these pupils to achieve as well as they could.

Leaders pay serious attention to ensuring that all pupils can read. They quickly identify pupils who need help with reading when they join the school. These pupils are well supported by skilled staff. Consequently, these pupils quickly become more confident and fluent readers. Leaders also place a strong emphasis on promoting reading throughout the school. During form time, for instance, adults read carefully chosen short stories to pupils. These stories help pupils to improve their vocabulary and broaden their knowledge of well-being and social issues.

The school has an impressive knowledge of each pupil, underpinned by comprehensive and systematic tracking. Close attention is paid to removing any barriers to success that pupils may experience. For example, pupils who are at the early stages of learning English take part in an intensive course in a highly supportive environment, where their learning and pastoral needs are carefully assessed. 'The Drive' is providing valuable support for pupils who find it difficult to succeed in the main school. A rugby programme with an external provider is supporting some pupils with their behaviour and mental health. Pupils, whose attendance is low, receive well-tailored and effective support to improve.

Pupils receive appropriate careers advice and work experience to help them to know what opportunities are available to them beyond school. Sixth-form students learn about university as well as other options.

Since the school joined the trust, trust leaders have worked effectively to strengthen the work of the school, including its governance. This work has been successful in supporting the school through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and in improving many aspects of its work. The trust is committed to ensuring that the school builds on its many strengths and enables pupils to achieve their potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' understanding within lessons well enough. This means that teachers do not always know where gaps in knowledge exist or when pupils are stuck. The school should ensure that teachers systematically check learning in their subjects so that they can identify gaps in learning and give pupils the help they need in a timely way to keep up with the intended curriculum.
- Teachers do not always know which strategies to use to support pupils who have SEND, particularly those pupils who find learning more difficult. As a result, at times, pupils miss out on important learning in lessons. The school should refine the information they give to teachers to ensure that it is precise and is relevant to day-to-day teaching, and consider how best to develop teachers' knowledge of SEND further.

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	147535
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10295121
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy convertor
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	824
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	58
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin Day
Headteacher	Julie Jones
Website	www.onslow.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Onslow St Audrey's became an academy in the Danes Educational Trust at the end of August 2019.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school uses three alternative providers; all of which are registered.
- 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.

- Inspectors initially inspected the school on 13 and 14 December 2023. On 30 and 31 January 2024, three of His Majesty’s Inspectors returned to the school to gather further evidence. The evidence gathered from all four days was used to inform the final judgements.
- 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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, and with trust leaders. Inspectors also met with other staff in the school. Inspectors met with the chair of the trust and the chair and vice-chair of the school board (the local governing body).
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science, languages, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also visited other lessons in different subjects, talked to leaders about these curriculum areas and looked at pupils’ work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences in school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted’s Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sue Morris-King, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
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Jonathan Rockey	His Majesty’s Inspector
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