

Inspection of St Ivo Academy

High Leys, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 6RR

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 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	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Tony Meneagh. This school is part of Astrea Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rowena Hackwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Benjamin Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers. Pupils know that teachers want them to achieve their best. They respond to these high expectations by trying hard in lessons. Pupils listen to teachers' clear explanations. They produce work that is of good quality. As a result, many pupils learn well. This is reflected in the strong performance in GCSE examinations.

Pupils' experiences at the school are improving. Pupils talk about the number of positive changes to their school in recent times. While they may not always understand why these have happened, many describe how the changes have made the school a better place. Some older pupils do not agree with all of the changes. Consequently, while many pupils enjoy and are happy coming to school there are some who do not.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They place high value on each other's individuality. It is not just ok to be different, it is important to value, respect and celebrate difference.

Pupils behave well. Lessons are calm and pupils focus their attention to the work set. Around the campus, pupils move around safely and with care for others. Younger pupils in particular, are reassured by higher levels of staff presence around the site. This helps them to feel safe.

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

The school is determined that all pupils will achieve highly. To ensure this, it has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. This curriculum is for all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know to be successful. Subject specialists set out exactly what should be taught and when. This means pupils learn successfully in steps. These steps ensure that pupils use what they have learned in the past to revisit and deepen their understanding of the subjects they study.

Teachers explain information clearly. They use well-crafted examples to illustrate the concepts they are describing. Teachers link content to the real world, local context and careers. They ask questions that test how well pupils understand. Teachers quickly pick up misconceptions or gaps in learning. They adapt their teaching to address these gaps. Consequently, pupils proceed with independent learning activities with confidence. They produce work of high quality. Pupils learn well.

Students in the sixth form value the expertise of their teachers and the quality of the instruction they receive. They produce detailed written responses to difficult and abstract concepts. Students are well supported to learn the subject knowledge they need. The support students get for independent study skills, such as organisation, is

less secure. Consequently, they do not always present their learning in a coherent way. They sometimes find it difficult to link new learning to what they already know.

In many cases, teachers have detailed information about how to support pupils with SEND. However, sometimes this information lacks precision about specific learning challenges. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan how to adapt their teaching to best meet pupils' individual needs. Subsequently, pupils with SEND do not always learn as well as expected. They struggle, at times, to keep up with their peers.

The school has developed a reading programme that exposes pupils to a wide range of engaging stories and books. The programme means pupils develop an understanding of different cultures, lifestyles and beliefs. Effective support is given to tackle the precise reason a pupil might be struggling with reading. Pupils quickly catch up and become confident and fluent readers.

There is a well-planned personal development programme for all pupils. Pupils learn about important topics that help them become positive citizens. This helps them to see how they can demonstrate key values, such as tolerance and respect. Pupils have access to a well-constructed careers programme, from Year 7 to Year 13. They access up to date and relevant information. Pupils speak positively about how they use this to help make well informed choices about their next steps.

The extra-curricular and enrichment offer is limited. This means that some pupils miss the opportunity to enjoy different experiences and to broaden their individual horizons, talents and interests.

The school has high expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves. Recently, it has changed its approach to managing behaviour. The system sets out simple structures and routines. Staff apply the system consistently. The result is that pupils understand what is expected. The school is calm, and learning is uninterrupted. Some parents and pupils do not agree with the school's approach and feel it is overly strict.

The school is relentless in improving attendance. When pupils are not attending regularly, leaders understand the specific challenges that families face. The school is proactive and doing all that can be reasonably expected to improve the attendance of its pupils.

While many parents are happy with the school and experiences of their children there are a number of stakeholders, including parents, who are unhappy, particularly with the trust. In these cases, they feel that several aspects of the school's provision are less than acceptable. Inspection findings confirm that the school, and the trust, take parental, pupil and staff views seriously. They listen to and consider what staff, pupils and parents think. This is considered in the school's and trust's decision making.

The trust has an accurate view of what the school is doing well and what it needs to improve. Trustees and the local governance committee provide robust challenge to

ensure that all decisions and strategies are in the best interest of pupils. The majority of staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to do so.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The plans for pupils with SEND sometimes lack precision. This means that teachers are not always able to plan successful adaptations for them. As a result, occasionally, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as the school intends. The school should ensure that plans for pupils with SEND are precise, target specific learning barriers and provide teachers with defined pedagogical strategies to support pupils. The school should also ensure that all teachers use these plans effectively to create adaptations to their pedagogical approaches.
- The opportunities for pupils to develop their wider interests is limited. This means that some pupils miss out on nurturing existing talents, interests, being introduced to new experiences and broadening their horizons. The school should ensure that there is a coherently planned programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities made accessible to all pupils.

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	137305
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10318607
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1672
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	269
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Benjamin Brown
Principal	Tony Meneagh
Website	www.astreastivo.org
Dates of previous inspection	16 to 18 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal took up the position, as an interim appointment, in September 2023.
- The school is part of Astrea Academy Trust.
- The school uses seven unregistered providers. These include two online providers for alternative provision.
- 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 schools education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. 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 meetings with leaders, including the principal, other senior leaders, and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the board of trustees, members of the local governing committee, the chief executive officer and other trust senior executives.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors looked at the school's approach to reading, and reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- 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.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. The lead inspector reviewed the 279 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To gather parents' views, inspectors reviewed the 459 responses and 321 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector also considered 48 emails sent to Ofsted and 4 letters delivered to the inspection team.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and reviewed the 108 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jennifer Brassington	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Young	Ofsted Inspector
James Shapland	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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