

Onslow St Audrey's School

Old Rectory Drive, Hatfield, AL10 8AB

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is typically good in most subjects. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and help students to understand what is expected of them in lessons and how they can improve their learning.
- The headteacher has high expectations of all students and staff. He and the leadership team have focused on developing high quality teaching and learning.
- The additional help and support given to individuals and groups of students who need extra help is well matched to their needs and ensures that they make rapid progress.
- A wide variety of subjects and work-related courses are offered to meet the needs and interests of the students. Students who follow work-related subjects achieve exceptionally well.
- Students are proud of their school and behave impeccably towards one another in lessons and around the school. Students feel safe and well cared for.
- Students' attendance is well above average.
- Many out-of-school activities, visits and visitors extend the range of opportunities available for students and this supports their personal development.
- The sixth form is good. The schools' partnership with other local schools allows sixth form students to follow a wide range of subjects and courses and, as a result, they achieve well.
- The leadership team and governors know their school very well and their self-evaluation is accurate.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some subjects where students do not achieve as well as in others and where teaching is not consistently good.
- Teachers do not all match work to students' abilities, particularly for the most able. As a result, too few student are achieving A* and B grades at GCSE.
- Teachers do not create enough opportunities for students to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers do not always give opportunities for students to think deeply or to express their ideas in discussion.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, some of them jointly with members of the leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits around the school.
- Meetings were held with governors, three different groups of students, a parent and representatives of three external agencies who work with the school. In addition, several meetings were held with school staff, including subject and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of information published on the school website, parent and student surveys, the 54 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, letters from parents and the 46 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on students' performance, the schools' own analysis of strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and records and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work. Inspectors also reviewed examples of students' past and present work.

Inspection team

Jackie Easter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Davies

Additional Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Onslow St Audrey's is a much smaller than average academy.
- The school converted to become an academy in January 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. This is funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, or with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational need is well above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in the form of a base for twelve students with speech and language difficulties.
- The school is part of the Welwyn and Hatfield 16–19 Consortium and students study some subjects in the sixth form in other schools.
- The school makes arrangements for a small number of students to attend The Park Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce variation amongst subjects so that the very good progress in key subjects is replicated in other areas by developing a systematic approach to sharing best practice
- Take advantage of the outstanding student behaviour and attitudes to learning to routinely deliver outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons of the right level of difficulty to match the individual needs of the students, particularly for the most able, and move forward learning as soon as they are ready for the next challenge
 - developing students' independence, allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning more often
 - asking searching and probing questions so that students think deeply, reflect on their own learning and draw their own conclusions
 - developing students' ability to express their thinking clearly and confidently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with standards that are usually the equivalent of between one and two terms behind the national average and they make good progress to achieve outcomes that are at least in line with national averages in most subjects and often higher. In 2012, the English and science results were well above the national average for similar schools and current Year 11 students are on course to match that achievement this year.
- The proportion of students who attain five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is likely to be significantly higher this year, largely due to some previous weaknesses in mathematics teaching having been addressed.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs benefit from a wide range of support and additional teaching to help them make rapid progress. Students are keen to do well and they appreciate the extra help that they get from their teachers.
- The school checks the progress of individuals very carefully and regularly so that any gaps in their learning are addressed. Work in students' books and the progress seen across a wide range of lessons during the inspection was good. Current predictions, based on accurate assessment, suggest a strong rise in students' attainment, and this is largely due to the relentless whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning.
- Good attention is given to improving students' literacy skills so that they tackle reading, writing, speaking and listening activities with confidence. Teachers make sure that students understand key subject vocabulary and they correct written work to make sure that it is accurate. The school uses tutor time well as part of the whole-school drive to promote reading for pleasure.
- Teachers often plan lessons that develop skills, knowledge and understanding that prepare them well for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Inspectors saw many examples of students applying their skills to real and relevant situations. For example, in one faculty area, the students were asked to design a Christmas card and then look at production and marketing before going on to get the cards printed and then sold.
- Students with speech and language difficulties make good progress. Their individual needs are carefully identified and they receive targeted additional one-to-one support from specialist teachers in the base, as well as support in some mainstream lessons. As a result, they achieve well.
- Currently, no students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- In 2012, students eligible for the pupil premium funding achieved GCSE or equivalent qualifications grades that were in line with their classmates. Current predictions are that the majority of current Year 11 students will also achieve more than expected progress in mathematics and English to catch up with their peers.
- Year 7 catch up funding is used well and the school is successfully closing the gap for students that start school behind their peers in reading or numeracy. This is achieved through the provision of a wide range of carefully planned approaches, such as one-to-one and small-group teaching, which address individual needs well.
- Students attending The Park make good progress. The school liaises closely with the unit and works with the staff there so that, when students return, they often achieve well. Inspectors met

students who have gone on to attend the sixth form and achieve distinctions in their BTech qualifications due to the quality of the support they had received.

- Relatively few students attain the highest grades at GCSE. This is because more-able students are not always set challenging enough work.

The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good. Students, and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire, agree that teaching is generally good. Students say that they enjoy coming to school and learning, and they speak very positively about their teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to their learning. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and this has a positive impact on the schools' climate for learning.
- Lessons are carefully planned and build learning, step by step. Teachers are skilled at sharing criteria with students so that they know what they are aiming for. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson on expanding algebra, the teacher used a wide repertoire of teaching methods, each building on each other, to develop the students' understanding. As a result, progress was rapid and the most able were well challenged.
- Where teaching is consistently good or outstanding, such as in English, teachers plan engaging and stimulating lessons that help student know how to improve their work. Teachers are skilled at using success criteria and building in peer and self-assessment so that students know where they are in their learning and what they have to do to improve.
- Marking is generally thorough and detailed, giving students clear targets and explaining what they have to do to improve.
- Lessons and extra-curricular activities promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Students speak very positively about the range of opportunities that there are and how these build their confidence and self-esteem. One parent told inspectors that he was thrilled by the way that the school had encouraged and supported his son to take up archery and sailing, how much this has helped his confidence and the positive effect this had had on his learning and progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers ask challenging questions which make students think deeply. Where teaching is less effective, students are sometimes quite passive and teachers do not give opportunities for students to discuss and develop their ideas.
- Assessment of students' progress is accurate and this information is used well in the majority of lessons to plan activities and provide resources that are well matched to students' abilities. Very occasionally, work is not demanding enough or the pace is not fast enough to ensure that the most able make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- In all lessons observed during the inspection and at all times around the school, behaviour was outstanding. Students are friendly and courteous and display exemplary attitudes to learning, even on the odd occasion that teaching requires improvement. Students work well with each other and relationships between staff and students are very good.

- Students say that behaviour is well managed and learning is rarely disrupted. Staff and parents agree. Students 'vote with their feet' and attend school regularly. As a result, attendance is well above national averages.
- Students report that they feel very safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of all forms of bullying and they told inspectors that bullying hardly ever occurs and if it did, it would be dealt with immediately. The school is a happy and harmonious community and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. One student described his experience at the school as being part of 'one big happy family'.
- The school is very inclusive and deals well with the small number of students who arrive with significant behavioural difficulties. There are effective systems for supporting students and dealing with any incidents of poor behaviour. There are no fixed-term exclusions because the school makes provision for dealing with issues internally. Inspectors talked to students and read case studies which demonstrate the significant efforts that the staff take in order to support students and help them to achieve their very best, sometimes in quite challenging circumstances. As a result of the care and support they receive, these students make good progress.
- The school buildings are old and in urgent need of refurbishment. Despite this, the students are proud of their school and look after it well. Displays of students' work in corridors and classrooms are of a high standard and are treated with respect; there was no litter to be seen in school or in the grounds.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's determination and ambition for the students is shared by the governors and he is ably supported by the leadership team and the staff in the drive to improve achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and plans for improvement accurately identify areas for development.
- Senior and subject leaders use information about students to monitor progress carefully and identify where extra support is needed. The pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding are used effectively and have been successful in narrowing gaps to such an extent that there are minimal differences in the achievement of different groups of students.
- The leadership team recognise the importance of developing students' literacy and numeracy skills and have developed well-thought out policies to support students' progress.
- Performance management is rigorous and senior managers tackle underperformance robustly. For example, the dip in mathematics outcomes in 2012 were dealt with immediately and effectively so that current students were not disadvantaged by weak teaching.
- Teaching is monitored closely and accurately, and teachers are helped to develop and improve their practice. Regular sharing of good practice has helped to drive up standards of teaching. Where teachers require improvement, decisive action is taken.
- The leadership team recognise that there is some variation in outcomes across subjects. Where this occurs, there are plans to address the weaknesses which include, in some cases, strengthening subject leadership to ensure that the excellent practice in some subjects is spread.
- The school strongly supports students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of activities out of lessons. The project about Hatfield's links with the aeronautical

industry is one example of how students of different abilities come together to work creatively and develop a wide range of skills.

- The schools' arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are highly committed to the school and share the aspirations of the headteacher. They have a good understanding of the performance data and the quality of teaching. The 'governor of the month' programme has helped them to get to know the school and explore various issues and themes first hand. As a result, they know the school well and this supports them in holding the school to account and checking on progress. They have undergone a wide range of training courses to support them in their roles. They are well informed about how teachers' pay is linked to performance in the classroom. They make sure that safeguarding and safe recruitment policies meet national requirements to keep students safe. Governors know how pupil-premium funding is spent and have looked at the impact of this on students' progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137792
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	413458

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Ellis-Hall
Headteacher	Paul Meredith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01707 264228
Fax number	01707 262332
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