

Sarum Academy

Westwood Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 9HS

Inspection dates

12–13 October 2017

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|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's strong leadership has led to rapid improvements over the past 18 months. A culture of high expectations and determination to improve the school is raising the expectations of teachers and the achievement of pupils.
- Pupil progress and achievement are improving in a wide range of subject areas, including English and mathematics, so that pupils now make good progress.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to one another and adults. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils respect one another and the school successfully fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders promote an ethos where everyone is included. A significant number of pupils join the school throughout the academic year. These pupils often did not previously attend or achieve well. The school is successful in helping them to make progress; however, some pupils still have difficulty in attending regularly.
- Subject leaders are increasingly effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, outcomes for the vast majority of pupils have improved. The school has been slower to improve the progress of the most able pupils.
- Leaders and managers use effective approaches to managing teachers' performance. Teachers are well supported. Opportunities for professional development improve their practice further.
- Teachers provide pupils with effective feedback about the quality of their work and how to improve it, in line with the school's assessment policy. As a result, pupils make good progress towards challenging targets.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have not achieved expected standards in English. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are well prepared to progress to the next stage of education or training at the end of Year 11 and, after Year 13, to higher education, training or employment. However, the school struggles to provide the broadest possible curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not have access to the full range of subjects, particularly at key stage 4.
- Pupils' physical and mental health is well supported by school leaders. Pupils feel safe, and are safe, in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, by:
 - relentlessly prioritising high expectations of attendance with pupils, parents and staff
 - continuing to implement and review strategies that have begun to improve attendance.
- Ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, have access to the broadest possible curriculum, which meets their needs and aspirations.
- Further raise the progress of the most able pupils by increasing stretch and challenge in teaching and learning activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's relentless drive to change the culture at the school is improving the standards of education. His clear focus on raising expectations is raising the expectations of staff and the achievement of pupils. Together with governors and the academy sponsor, leaders are making good progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the school development plan.
- The headteacher and governors are highly ambitious for the school and its pupils. Staff and pupils are proud to be members of the school and proud of the improvements that have been made. Morale is high and relationships with parents are good.
- Leaders make effective use of external support to provide expertise in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Local schools have supported subject teachers, for example in science, to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The leadership and management of teaching continue to improve. As a result, outcomes for pupils have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now good.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that there are good systems to hold teachers to account for pupils' learning and outcomes. Highly effective procedures for inducting new staff and targeting training for teachers and leaders are improving the overall quality of teaching.
- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of what the school does well and what is required to become even more successful. The school development plan sets out clear routes for further improvement. Challenging, but realistic, targets are set out and appropriate actions identified. Leaders' accurate self-evaluation ensures that the progress towards targets is carefully monitored.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding to improve the achievement of pupils who have not previously achieved the expected standards in English. Leaders ensure that support for reading and literacy is effective, so that the vast majority of these pupils make good progress to catch up with their peers and none falls further behind. The focus on literacy ensures that the pupils can achieve well across the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well supported to overcome barriers to their learning and make good progress. The school takes a high proportion of pupils whose attendance and achievement have previously been poor. A number of vulnerable pupils start at the school in older year groups. Although leaders have been successful in improving the attendance of a large number of its pupils, overall attendance rates do not yet reach the national average.
- Leaders and managers track pupils' progress carefully, and use this information to target support for individuals effectively. Leaders' actions are improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils, so that they make similar progress to other pupils nationally. Governors ensure that funding is used well to make a real difference for targeted pupils. The additional funding is used to provide support for teaching and for mental and emotional well-being, as well as opportunities to participate more fully in curriculum opportunities.

- Leaders' commitment to providing equality of opportunity is evident in the progress made by those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of effective leadership, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities matches that of their peers. Governors' oversight of the funding provided for these pupils is good.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities that prepare pupils well for their next stages of education or training at the end of Year 11. Consequently, they make good progress and are well prepared to be active citizens in modern Britain. Leaders are committed to providing the widest possible curriculum in this small school. However, they struggle to offer all pupils access to the full range of curriculum opportunities. Through collaboration with partner schools, plans are in place that demonstrate the potential to create a full curriculum offer from January 2018.
- Leaders successfully promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills of pupils through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are actively engaged in the life of the school through the school council, the ethos group, anti-bullying ambassadors, peer mentoring and prefects. Pupils can articulate ways in which they have influenced the running of the school, for example the design of the new uniform and the environmental focus this year.
- Parents, pupils, staff and governors are extremely positive about the changes that have been made since the appointment of the headteacher in 2016. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were extremely positive about the care offered at the school for their children. Parent comments on the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school and a common theme was 'I cannot praise the school highly enough'. Pupils agree that the behaviour and learning have improved and explain that they feel known and valued.

Governance of the school

- Governors and the academy sponsor support and challenge the school effectively. The result is continued improvement. Decisive action by the sponsor led to the restructuring of the governing body and senior leadership. A culture of high expectations for leadership, behaviour and achievement now exists, which, in turn, has resulted in improvements in outcomes for pupils.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and ensure that the school's development priorities are focused on further improvement. Governors maintain a secure understanding of the school through regular visits and close working with leaders at all levels. Their systems ensure that they have the skills and attributes required to support the school in all aspects of its work.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the leaders' analysis of progress and attainment, particularly of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They carefully monitor the quality of teaching and how the performance management of staff is used to reward effective practice.
- Governors effectively oversee the use of pupil premium and catch-up funding to improve the achievement of pupils that benefit from this additional funding. They ensure that the additional funds provided have the desired impact on pupil progress.

Safeguarding

- A culture of safeguarding permeates all aspects of the school's work. Attitudes to stereotyping, intolerance, bullying and mutual respect make it an environment where pupils feel safe and are safe. Pupils are very confident that staff will react very swiftly to any concerns raised and that there are adults in the school whom they would be confident to turn to. Accurate records, and good systems of communication, ensure that staff have appropriate information to support vulnerable pupils and that any issues raised are followed up effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and all statutory requirements are met.
- Staff across the school are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and vigilant in looking for signs of abuse. Leaders have ensured that they know how to report, and act on, any concerns raised.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in a number of situations. The school ensures that they are well aware of dangers from exploitation and abuse or radicalisation. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders' actions, identified in the school development plan, focus sharply on improving teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. The school policy that emphasises the use of feedback from teachers and pupils' responses to that feedback has been particularly effective. This chosen approach is leading to improvements across almost all subjects for all year groups and resulting in more rapid progress for pupils.
- Teachers plan well and use the time in lessons effectively. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and outcomes. The vast majority of pupils therefore make good progress and achieve well across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Many, but not all, teachers use questioning skilfully to check understanding and support children's learning. Where it is done well, pupils make good progress and are challenged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and this contributes to a very positive learning environment. Teachers use their assessments and feedback to structure learning and develop pupils' understanding. Pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve. Pupils respond to teachers' feedback and use it to support progress and correct misunderstandings. Parents value the information that they receive from the school about their child's progress.
- Teachers and the special educational needs department provide good support for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, their progress is in line with that of other pupils nationally. The effectiveness of teaching assistants seen

during the inspection was variable. Where good practice occurs, teaching assistants are proactive in developing pupils' understanding through questioning and prompting.

- The development of pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills, across the curriculum, is a strength of teaching at the school. Pupils in Year 7, whose reading on entry to the school was weak, read challenging texts confidently and with understanding. Collaborative working across mathematics, science and geography is also developing some strengths in numeracy across the curriculum.
- Pupils take pride in their work. Teachers have consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work across a wide range of subjects. The school motto of 'best work first time' is evident in the exercise books of all year groups and of all abilities. Pupils present their work well and there is little difference in the quality of presentation between boys and girls, or between disadvantaged and other pupils.
- Teachers do not routinely provide opportunities for pupils who have missed work through absence to catch up. Those pupils who are regularly absent, therefore, have gaps in the content of work covered and, consequently, their knowledge and understanding. In some subjects, the most able pupils are not always provided with sufficient stretch and challenge, and therefore they do not make the progress that they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, courteous and extremely proud of their school. They care about one another and their teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and positive, providing an orderly atmosphere. Relationships between pupils in the school and the peer support provided by older pupils ensure that pupils enjoy a good sense of community.
- Pupils feel safe in all areas of the school. Bullying is rare and derogatory language is not tolerated. Where bullying does happen, pupils are confident that it is quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils are well equipped to keep themselves safe outside the school and on the internet, through a comprehensive personal, social, health and careers education programme.
- Pupils have a clear understanding that stereotyping and prejudice are wrong and that difference is accepted. They have a strong concept of equality, as expressed by one pupil: 'We just treat everyone the same.' Pupils spoken to during the inspection felt that the school acted quickly and effectively to correct any inappropriate language or views.
- Leaders are good at promoting and supporting the mental and physical health of pupils. Leaders have invested in support for vulnerable pupils and there is evidence that this is having an effect on their well-being. Pupils value the support provided.

- Independent careers advice and guidance provided by the school are a strength. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education or training.
- Excellent transition arrangements ensure that pupils quickly settle into the school from feeder primary schools, or when joining the school in other year groups. Foreign exchange students in the sixth form spoke highly of the welcome that they had received. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure when they arrive at the school and well prepared for learning.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their child is happy, safe and well cared for by the school. This was confirmed by the conversations that inspectors had with pupils. Parents were particularly impressed by the support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the response of the school in meeting those needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct and manners are good. They are polite and courteous, showing high levels of responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They take pride in their work and enjoy being challenged at an appropriate level. Disruption of learning due to poor behaviour is rare and dealt with quickly by teachers. Records show that the headteacher's strategies have had a profound effect in improving behaviour. This is confirmed by both staff and pupils.
- Levels of attendance have risen. Most pupils now have good attendance. However, the attendance of a small group of pupils remains stubbornly low and this has an adverse effect on the overall figures, particularly for persistent absence. Many of these pupils have joined the school during the academic year and previously did not attend well. Improving the attendance of all pupils remains a priority for school leaders.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons and settle quickly to learning. As a result, lessons start promptly and little time is wasted. Pupils have the correct equipment and respect one another's right to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The standards achieved by pupils are rising, and their progress in the 2017 examinations was in line with the national average. Teachers' assessments and the work produced by pupils currently on roll confirm that standards are continuing to rise and their progress is strong. There are examples of real stretch and challenge, for example in Year 8 mathematics.
- Pupils now make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The standard of work seen during the inspection showed that the improvement in progress achieved in the 2017 examination results has been consolidated and embedded in all year groups, across a range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of education or training and have the qualifications,

skills and attributes required to succeed. As a consequence, all pupils progress from Year 11 to sustained places in education or training.

- Disadvantaged pupils make at least as much progress as other pupils nationally across a range of subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making good progress, in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have previously not achieved expected standards in reading and writing are making good progress in Year 7 to catch up with their peers. The school is effective in promoting literacy across the curriculum and, as a result, reading, writing and spelling have improved. Opportunities for extended writing were seen across a range of subjects and the school's consistent approach to feedback about written work is raising the standards of writing.
- Across a wide range of subjects and year groups, high teacher expectations are leading to improved progress and achievement of pupils. This is particularly true in science and religious education (RE). In the small number of subjects where achievement is not improving, low teacher expectations are hindering progress. Leaders are taking decisive and effective action to ensure that there are consistently high expectations across all subjects and from all teachers.
- The progress of a small number of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, has historically been well below national averages. Evidence seen during the inspection showed that high prior attaining pupils are currently making progress in line with national averages. School leaders are aware of the need to continue to improve the ability of teachers to ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable. The progress of middle and lower prior attaining pupils is in line with national averages and pupils currently in the school are making good progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students make good progress from their various starting points in their different subjects. Progress over time is at least in line with national averages. In applied subjects, it is above national averages.
- The number of students completing their courses and progressing to higher education, employment or training is above national averages. The school has a number of foreign exchange students who follow one-year courses, which affects their published figures. The positive contribution of these students to the cultural ethos of the 16 to 19 programme is a strength of the provision. Students enjoy their courses and respond well to the teaching that they receive.
- Leadership of the 16 to 19 provision is strong. Leaders have high expectations of students and ensure that those who have not achieved the required standard in GCSE English or mathematics make good progress towards achieving this during their time in the sixth form.
- Students follow study programmes that meet their needs and interests. The independent advice and guidance that they receive in Year 11 ensure that they choose suitable programmes. Further advice and guidance throughout the sixth form ensure

that they are well prepared for their future. The academic or applied courses that students follow are complemented by a range of non-qualification opportunities that broaden their interests and develop employability skills. Students benefit from opportunities to undertake relevant work experience. However, leaders do not monitor and implement these opportunities rigorously.

- Teaching ensures that students achieve well in their examinations. In some academic subjects, however, an over-emphasis on examination criteria and techniques limits the development of deeper thinking around the subject. For example, in psychology, the focus on the examination specification limits the opportunities for deepening students' understanding of and engagement with the topic.
- Students have numerous opportunities to be engaged in the life of the school, for example supporting the drama club and listening to pupils read. They understand and appreciate people from different cultures.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136183 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 10024919 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 420 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 102 |
| Appropriate authority | The Academy Trust |
| Chair | Mike Oldham |
| Headteacher | Jonathan Curtis |
| Telephone number | 01722 323431 |
| Website | www.sarumacademy.org/ |
| Email address | jean.campbell@sarumacademy.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 29–30 January 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Sarum Academy is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is below average.

- The proportion of children who are disadvantaged is well above average.
- The numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school during their secondary education are well above average. Many of these children have a history of poor attendance.
- Attainment on entry to the school, in all year groups, is significantly below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a number of classes and subjects, reviewed pupils' work and talked to pupils about it. Samples of work across a range of subjects and year groups were analysed.
- Inspectors held meetings with different groups of pupils to discuss their experience of the school and listen to their views.
- Inspectors observed and talked to pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes, as well as before and after school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the development plan and the pupil premium report. They looked at documents related to safeguarding, records of behaviour and attendance, and information on pupils' achievement, including the school's current assessment information. Governors' minutes and records of governor training and visits into school were reviewed. Documents relating to the management of teachers' performance were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered 31 responses to the staff questionnaire and the school's surveys of staff, parents and pupils.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| David New, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
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