

Jane Austen College

46-48 Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1DD

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, at all levels, have successfully established a school where excellence and endeavour are everyday expectations for all staff and pupils.
- Pupils make exceptional progress because staff instil the highest expectations of what they can achieve. Pupils' rapid progress is ensured by ambitious target-setting, rigorous assessment, an excellent curriculum and good teaching.
- Strong leadership of teaching ensures that, in a new and expanding school, the effective induction of new staff and a relentless focus on all pupils achieving their potential are at the heart of this aspect of the school's work.
- Teaching overall is good, not outstanding. Teachers have high aspirations, but learning is not always pitched at the right level and some teaching is too pedestrian.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- The progress of some pupils is held back because they are not yet confident with their reading and writing. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English and science.
- The curriculum promotes and instils high aspirations very effectively. Pupils build strong foundations for their academic achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values are inherent in all aspects of daily life in the school.
- Standards of behaviour are typically very high. Pupils are polite, respectful, considerate and proud of their school. The atmosphere in lessons and around the school is calm, orderly and purposeful.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe is very effective. The welfare and personal development of pupils are non-negotiable priorities for staff at all levels.
- Sixth-form students make outstanding progress. The proportion progressing to university, employment and/or training is much better than the national average.
- Governors strike just the right balance of challenge and support, and maintain a sharp focus on ensuring that all pupils achieve well. They are very effective in holding school leaders to account for their performance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Address the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by making sure that all teachers:
 - embed the school’s literacy strategy so that learning is accessible for all pupils, in particular for those who are yet to reach the expected standards in reading and writing
 - plan activities to support and secure the school’s policy of ‘challenge for all’, more consistently, in all lessons.
- Ensure that the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make in mathematics is as strong as it is in English and science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and senior staff provide strong leadership and very clear direction for the school. They are successful in promoting an inclusive ethos of high expectations and the commitment to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Every pupil is valued and given the chance to be successful.
- The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about the opportunities the school provides. As one parent commented, 'since coming here, my child has developed a positive outlook on the importance of school life'. Another said, 'after a miserable and difficult time at junior school, my child is so happy now and producing an amazing standard of work'.
- The school's leadership team strives for the very best. The culture of reflection and improvement ensures that the school's self-evaluation is open and honest. As a result, staff at all levels are very clear about what is going well and what needs to improve.
- Strong middle leadership drives school improvement because middle leaders are directly involved in strategic decision making and are held accountable, by senior staff, for securing continuous improvement in their faculties and across the school. The accountability of staff, at all levels, for ensuring that pupils make excellent progress is a key feature of development planning and performance management.
- Staff have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities. This ensures that teachers constantly improve their practice, and that the most effective staff develop the necessary skills so that leadership capacity is developed as the school grows.
- The systems to monitor pupils' progress, including checks on how well the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are used, are detailed and highly effective. Assessment information is based on 'mastery checkpoints'. This system sets targets based on pupils making more than expected progress from their different starting points. Regular reviews identify where pupils are not on track to meet their challenging targets. Swift action is taken to put any extra help in place. The impact of this work is evident in the exceptional progress that pupils make.
- The school works closely with local teacher training partnerships and with a teaching school in the trust. The high proportion of newly qualified teachers, who started at Jane Austen College in September 2016, are well supported. They are very positive about their school, its culture and academic focus. They value the guidance from more experienced mentors, who are successful in helping them to develop their teaching practice beyond the initial training.
- Senior leaders recognise the challenges presented as the new school grows and reaches capacity over the next three years, and in particular to ensure that all new staff are quickly equipped with the skills to maintain the required focus on the highest standards in their teaching. As a result, high priority is given to the induction of new staff. The continuous improvement of teaching and learning is a regular feature of the rigorous approach to the professional development of all staff.
- Working relationships between the school and its local primary schools are good. This

is helping to ensure that the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 is smooth. Senior leaders have recently appointed a transition lead member of staff to strengthen further outreach work with primary schools. The high priority given to ensuring that Year 7 pupils get off to a good start is clear. As a result, it is not surprising that one new parent told inspectors, 'my child enjoys each activity and speaks positively about everything he learns'. Another said, 'Since moving to Jane Austen, my child has become a confident learner and his academic work has improved past my expectations'.

- The school's curriculum, including the extended day and enrichment programme, establishes high aspirations for all pupils to achieve well, regardless of their circumstances or starting points. The breadth of subjects enables pupils, for example, to explore our cultural heritage and study challenging subjects, such as philosophy and sociology, at key stage 3. The three-year GCSE programme, starting in Year 9, allows for deeper learning and the successful promotion of wide reading.
- Assemblies are planned like lessons and typically are impeccably managed occasions. As such, they contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their excellent understanding of British values, including democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty. During the inspection, pupils gave thoughtful consideration to challenging 'an eye for an eye' mentality and prejudice. The theme of segregation, in Black History Month, was carefully threaded through each activity so that pupils reflected on wider moral and social issues.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Across year groups, they take on leadership responsibilities designed to help them develop important skills for progression and employment. Popular enrichment and elective programmes offer wide-ranging academic, leadership and special interest choices, such as military history, creative writing and modern foreign languages coaching.
- The extended school day enables pupils to undertake supervised study, out of lessons, in 'prep' time. Activities are designed to consolidate and extend learning. A minority of parents of Year 7 pupils are not yet clear about the link between this and more traditional homework. In their responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, a few parents said that communications between parents and the school could be strengthened further.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body, well supported by trustees, has a clear strategic vision that is firmly rooted in high aspirations. Governors have wide-ranging skills and expertise. They use these effectively to provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. Unequivocally, they sustain a relentless focus on ensuring that all pupils achieve their best, both in their academic studies and in their personal development.
- Governors are rigorous in their approach to the performance management of the principal. They are equally rigorous in reviewing the professional development and pay progression of staff. They keep a close eye on the school's budget and a strong focus on ensuring the effective use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Governors are well aware of what the school is doing well and what it needs to

improve. For example, when attendance dipped in the spring term of 2016, they made additional checks to ensure that the strategies put in place were working and that value for money was secured. By the autumn term, overall attendance had risen and was above the national figure.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's work to ensure that its pupils are safe is very effective. The leadership of this aspect is strong. Senior leaders and governors have ensured that statutory requirements are met. Training for staff and governors is in place and is regularly updated. As a result, leaders and school staff are very knowledgeable about what they need to do if a safeguarding concern arises. Work with other agencies is rigorous and swift action is taken to address any issues identified. This is exemplified in the words of one school leader who said, 'Staff are encouraged to think the unthinkable'. The anticipation of 'worst-case scenario' ensures that staff are ready and confident to confront any potential safeguarding matters head on. School leaders are unwavering in their commitment to ensuring that vulnerable pupils have the support they need to help them to succeed. There are excellent examples of the effectiveness of this support reflected in the progress that these pupils are making since joining the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils benefit from high-quality teaching across a range of subjects, including in the sixth form. The effective combination of a well-designed curriculum, good teaching, regular and accurate assessment and appropriate interventions to address individual learning needs results in sustained progress over time.
- Teachers have successfully established very good working relationships that create a positive learning environment with high expectations for all.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to set suitably challenging work and to skilfully pose questions, to check pupils' understanding and to extend their learning. For example, in an art lesson there was an engaged 'buzz' of learning and pupils spoke avidly about creativity. In psychology, the teacher skilfully built on Year 12 students' responses, across the ability range in the group, to ensure that shared learning was taken to the highest level.
- In Year 9, when pupils start a three-year GCSE programme, and in the sixth form, teachers maintain a strong focus on the skills needed for examination success and the development of a deep understanding of the subject. As one parent said, 'my child has started to work towards GCSEs. A love of maths has been instilled through excellent teaching'.
- Occasionally, in particular in Year 7, aspects of work in lessons are not pitched at a challenging enough level for the highest achievers and the pace of learning slows. Conversely, the progress of a few pupils is hampered because they have not yet had enough time to catch up with reading and writing skills that fell short of expectations at the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, rigorous and accurate assessments ensure that extra help is put in place where needed. Consequently, most pupils are on track to make good or better progress by the end of key stage 3.

- The school gives high priority to developing pupils' literacy skills and encourages a love of reading. As one parent said, 'my child loves nothing more than spending time in the library and discovering what to read next'. Independent reading is effectively promoted in timetabled sessions and complemented by shared reading. In these lessons, teachers read together with pupils and help them to develop their understanding through discussion of challenging texts.
- The focus on reading, writing and subject language skills development is not as consistently strong in other lessons as it is in English. As a result, opportunities to help pupils to secure faster progress, and reduce the need for interventions, are not seized equally well in all subjects.
- Assessment systems are very well managed. The assessment model used by the school has been rigorously tested. Information is carefully checked to ensure that it is accurate and interventions are quickly put in place where extra help is needed. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well so that they are able to make accelerated progress in most subjects.
- The school's approach to study out of lessons involves supervised 'prep' in Years 7, 8 and 9 during the extended school day. Inspectors observed some very challenging work taking place in these sessions during the inspection. The 'prep' programme has a cross-curricular focus on deep learning, reinforcement and transferable skills. The school's view is that this model, rather than homework, provides greater structure and challenge at key stage 3 in laying the foundations for self-discipline, scholarship and independent learning skills. Most, but not all, parents agree with this view.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils at Jane Austen College are polite and courteous to visitors and with each other. They discuss their school and their work with pride. Pupils are supportive of each other and welcoming to new pupils joining the school.
- Pupils say that they value the breadth of opportunity the school offers, through the wide-ranging curriculum, and the skills they practise as they become more self-motivated and self-reliant learners.
- Typically, pupils like being stretched by the work they are set and respond to this challenge very well. They know what to do when they need help with their work, or if they have personal concerns.
- Pupils learn to be self-confident and articulate. They are encouraged to be reflective, and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of moral, social and cultural issues. As one parent said, 'philosophy lessons have made my children big thinkers'.
- Initiatives such as the student council, subject ambassadors and inter-house competitions allow pupils across year groups to take on leadership roles and play a full part in the life of the school. The skills they develop in these roles help to develop personal attributes that prepare them well for life beyond school.
- The school is meticulous in its approach to teaching pupils how to keep safe. Parents

are involved in discussing important personal safety issues, such as safe use of the internet and social media websites. As a result, pupils feel safe and bullying is rare. In meetings, they told inspectors that, 'if something happens, teachers sort it out quickly'. The vast majority of parents agree with this view.

- Tutorials and assemblies are very effective in raising important social, moral and cultural issues for discussion, for example about individual differences and worldwide events. In a tutorial debate about the US election, Year 7 pupils demonstrated a maturity and understanding beyond their age and stage. Pupils know right from wrong and are very clear about the need to show respect for and tolerance of others.
- Pupils are confident that the school encourages them to live healthy lives. They have a very good understanding of healthy eating and the physical benefits of regular exercise. For example, the removal of fizzy drinks from sale in the dining hall was a decision led by the school council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' high standards of behaviour make a strong contribution to the welcoming and inclusive ethos of the school. The vast majority of pupils are eager to learn and succeed. Typically, they concentrate and work hard in lessons.
- Teachers promote high expectations and are successful in fostering good working relationships with their pupils. They use the rewards and sanctions, as set out in the behaviour policy, consistently well. As a result, the school is a very calm and orderly place to learn. Teachers, in their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, say that they feel very well supported by senior leaders and that pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively in the school.
- Year 7 pupils make a good start and are eager to learn. These attitudes continue to grow with them throughout their time at Jane Austen College and are evidenced in their readiness to learn in lessons.
- Pupils attend well, are punctual to lessons and bring the correct equipment. Instances of low-level disruption are dealt with quickly. During the inspection, inspectors noted that pupils have very high expectations of each other's behaviour because of the high priority given by all staff to the expected standards in the school.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils was identified as a concern in 2015-16. Swift action was taken to address this, including the appointment of new staff. As a result, the attendance of this group improved significantly.
- A very small minority of parents, in their free-text responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, said that they feel that sanctions are too harsh, or, in one case, that concerns about behaviour are not addressed quickly enough. These views were not consistent with the views of most parents.
- The incidence of exclusions of pupils from school, although previously relatively few in number, has reduced significantly this year, as the high standards of behaviour expected are secured in the new school. This sanction is used appropriately to manage the behaviour of the most challenging pupils and only when all other measures have been exhausted.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' exceptional progress results from the combination of the culture of high aspirations, effective teaching, rigorous assessment and highly personalised interventions, based on accurate assessments of pupils' individual learning needs. The excellent curriculum ensures that the level of challenge is typically appropriate for the most able pupils and that pupils who need extra help are supported to achieve well.
- The proportion of pupils who make or exceed expected progress in English, mathematics and science, from their various starting points, is much higher than the national average. For example, in summer 2016, at the end of Year 8, 91% of pupils met or exceeded targets in English and 88% of pupils made similar progress in mathematics and science. For the few pupils not making expected progress at this stage, interventions are swift and effective.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make or exceed expected progress in mathematics and science is similar to, or higher than, the proportion for non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Differences in the progress of disadvantaged pupils in English are diminishing rapidly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than other pupils nationally in science. The difference in progress in English for this group is reducing. However, the difference in progress in mathematics is not diminishing as rapidly as it is in English.
- Most pupils who benefit from additional funding to help them catch up in mathematics and English in Year 7 are making or exceeding expected progress. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are catching up quickly.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage in learning. Sixth-form students leave with qualifications and skills that equip them very effectively for the challenges ahead. As a result, the proportion of students who progress to higher education, training and employment is much higher than the national figure.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The outstanding progress seen at key stage 3 is also reflected in current progress in Years 12 and 13. The (as yet) unvalidated 2016 A-level results suggest better outcomes than in 2015 and strong progress from students' different starting points when they joined from other schools at the end of key stage 4.
- Students make excellent progress, including those with lower prior attainment at entry. Particularly strong progress was noted, for example, in German, English language and drama. In any areas where progress is less strong, for example in history, a clear action plan is in place. This is closely monitored by governors and senior leaders.
- Outcomes for summer 2016 suggest that the school's tracking and assessment information is robust. A comprehensive and highly personalised intervention plan ensures that students who are at risk of falling behind are supported to catch up. Teachers in the sixth form have excellent subject knowledge and are typically good role models. Lessons are planned carefully and take very effective account of examination

assessment criteria. This makes sure that students are very clear about what they need to do to reach higher grades.

- Attendance is checked carefully. In 2015-16, sixth-form attendance was lower than in the main school. A new sixth-form attendance policy was put in place, along with a programme of sixth-form tutorials and academic mentoring. As a result, substantial progress was made and sixth-form attendance is now higher than the national average.
- The extensive programme of extra-curricular option choices ensures that students are given opportunities to develop, broaden their horizons and succeed. For example, students follow the Jane Austen College 'professional writing course', join the rhetoric society or history club, or opt to contribute to the production of the school magazine. This programme supports career aspirations and prepares students very well for future employment and continued study.
- High expectations from sixth-form teachers, a programme of visiting speakers and external visits have a highly positive effect on raising aspirations and promoting opportunities beyond school. Careers information, advice and guidance are very effective in helping students to plan the next stage in their education and to make successful applications. As a result, all Year 13 students completing in summer 2016 secured university places, or progressed to further studies or employment. A higher proportion of students went on to university than is typically seen nationally. Almost half of them take up places in highly academic universities with the very highest entry tariffs.

School details

Unique reference number	140815
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10021787

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	536
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel de Souza
Principal	Claire Heald
Telephone number	01603 463800
Website	www.inspirationtrust.org/our_schools/jane_austen_college
Email address	janeausten@inspirationtrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

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.
- The school opened as a new school within the Inspiration Trust, a multi-academy trust, in September 2014. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and currently has pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, and sixth-form students in Years 12 and 13.
- Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with ability ranges similar to the national average. Students

join the sixth form from other schools.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore supported by the pupil premium is rising and is currently similar to the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, are lower than the national average.
- The school does not use alternative education provision.
- Jane Austen College sixth-form provision works in partnership with Sir Isaac Newton School, a local sixth-form free school within the same trust. The principal of Jane Austen College is also the executive principal of the sixth-form free school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across subjects and year groups in 36 lessons or parts of lessons. Some of these observations were undertaken by inspectors accompanied by members of the school's leadership team.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' work with them in lessons. They also looked closely at samples of pupils' written work across a range of abilities, subjects and groups.
- Inspectors visited registration and tutorial sessions, observed an assembly at the start of the school day and viewed the supported study time at the end of the day. In addition, they visited the library, spoke to the librarian and listened to six pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, and the chair and representatives of the local governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to newly qualified teachers and held a telephone meeting with the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from all year groups, including sixth-form students, in meetings, in lessons and informally around the school. They also observed pupils' conduct and behaviour throughout the school day.
- Inspectors considered the school's policies, including those for safeguarding and safer recruitment, records relating to pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, and documentation relating to safeguarding practice, performance management information, self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors reviewed 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 responses from parents on Ofsted's free-text service. They also took account of the responses from staff and students to the online questionnaires provided by Ofsted to the school.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Aykin	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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