

Inspection of Holyrood Academy

Zembard Lane, Chard, Somerset TA20 1JL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 10 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy learning and aspire to do well. Pupils have a breadth of options to develop their wider interests. For example, they join sport clubs and get involved in school events, such as the recent school production, 'The Addams Family'. Pupils enrich their learning through educational visits, such as those to Paris to practise their French, and Glasgow to view the art galleries.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive appropriate careers guidance. They are well informed about their choices and how to enter the world of work, apprenticeships and further education.

Pupils and staff have positive relationships. Leaders have strengthened the support available for pupils. For example, pupils who experience mental health difficulties can access help readily and effectively.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They value the recognition they receive when they attend school regularly. Pupils state that bullying is not an issue at the school and that staff resolve problems when they occur. Leaders deal with any instances of poor behaviour well. For example, leaders encourage pupils to reflect on the impact of the language they use.

Pupils gain leadership skills through their roles as prefects. Students in the sixth form have many opportunities to lead. For example, they organise social events, such as discos.

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

Leaders and staff have revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils build a strong understanding of a range of subjects. It is an ambitious curriculum. For example, leaders have designed a very well-structured modern foreign languages curriculum to encourage more pupils to continue their study at GCSE and A level. Consequently, the proportion of pupils studying the suite of subjects required for the English Baccalaureate has increased. Leaders acknowledge that in 2022, many pupils at the end of key stage 4 did not achieve as well as they should have. Leaders have now improved the curriculum and how well this is taught, so that current pupils in Years 7 to 11 learn more effectively.

Staff use assessment well to review what pupils have learned and adapt teaching accordingly. As a result, pupils are secure in their understanding in a breadth of subjects. For example, Year 7 pupils write at length about their lives in German and speak with accurate pronunciation.

Reading is at the heart of the Holyrood curriculum. Pupils read regularly for enjoyment during the day. The library has a breadth of books to interest pupils. Leaders have selected texts to stimulate pupils' reflections on the world around

them. For example, they read texts about migration, equality and the importance of empathy. Teachers use assessment well to gauge pupils' reading knowledge. Where necessary, pupils receive support to develop their reading skills further. Those with significant reading difficulties study an age-appropriate phonics programme with success.

Teachers, in all subjects, receive information about the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who require intensive language and literacy support receive the help they need. However, teaching is not consistently adapted well enough to support some pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum successfully. Leaders use alternative provision appropriately for some pupils. For example, pupils learn about animal management and agriculture at a local farm.

Leaders have designed a well-planned careers programme to support all pupils, including students in the sixth form, with their future plans. Pupils in Year 10 and students in the sixth form complete work experience to prepare them for their next steps. Students in the sixth form receive strong support for applying to university.

Pupils and students in the sixth form learn about the importance of citizenship. They understand clearly the significance of individual liberty and value the well-being of others.

Sixth-form students are very proud of their school and value the quality of education they receive. They have many opportunities to extend their learning through trips to universities and welcoming visitors from the world of work.

Governance is effective. The local governance committee works closely with the trust board to ensure and be assured that pupils learn well and are safe. However, some parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, report that leaders have not communicated clearly enough with them about some aspects of the school's work, such as the changes made to the curriculum and the revised behaviour systems.

Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. Early career teachers feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure the physical and emotional safety of pupils, including students in the sixth form. Leaders have increased the capacity of the safeguarding team to ensure that pupils receive timely and appropriate support.

Staff receive safeguarding training alongside regular updates. They know how to identify if a pupil is at risk. Staff diligently record their concerns. Leaders carry out appropriate background checks on all adults employed at the school.

Pupils know that they can talk to an adult if they have a concern. Pupils learn to keep safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The needs of some pupils with SEND are not met consistently well. Therefore, such pupils do not learn the curriculum successfully. Leaders must ensure that teachers use the information they have about pupils' needs to adapt the curriculum in response.
- Leaders have not communicated with parents clearly enough about aspects of the school's work. Consequently, some parents and carers express dissatisfaction that they have not been well informed about some of the changes that have been made. Leaders should consider how they can develop stronger links with parents and carers to engage with them in a positive and constructive way.

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.

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136295
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10266481
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter controlled
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	1322
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Max Graesser
Headteacher	Dave Maccormick
Website	www.holyroodacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2013

Information about this school

- Holyrood Academy is part of Uffculme Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider and four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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 held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector also held discussions with the chief executive officer of the Uffculme Academy Trust and the chair of the board of directors of Uffculme Academy Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, computer science, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Weeds	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Maraspin	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023