

Inspection of a good school: Aylsham High School

Sir Williams Lane, Aylsham, Norwich, Norfolk NR11 6AN

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Outcome

Aylsham High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Aylsham High School is at the heart of the local community. Pupils are happy and safe around the school. They want to do well. They work hard in lessons. This enables them to learn effectively and achieve results they can be proud of.

Pupils are expected to focus on their studies and act sensibly. The ethos of the school encourages them to be independent and make sensible choices in their learning and behaviour. The positive relationships between staff and pupils support this effectively.

It is rare to hear any unkind language in the school. Pupils understand the impact of such language on others and do not accept it. They know that if they were to report any concerns, these would be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Pupils are confident that adults will act to ensure their safety and well-being.

There are opportunities to be involved in school life through sports, the arts, the school council and the organisation of charity events. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is popular and successful for pupils in Year 9 and above.

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

The school's planning and development of the curriculum enable pupils to achieve consistently well over time at the end of key stage 4. Many subjects have detailed 'maps' of the intended learning for pupils. As a result, the sequence of learning is clear. The assessment of pupils' knowledge is effective both at the end of topics and through teacher intervention in the classroom. This means that teachers keep a close eye on what pupils know and can do. Lessons are adapted accordingly to ensure new learning builds on what pupils already know.

Pupils receive very clear and detailed explanations of new information to support their learning. Leaders prioritise the identification of those children who struggle with reading. There is a variety of programmes to support children at the very earliest stages of

reading. This means that pupils who find reading tricky are guided skilfully to catch up well.

The approach to ensuring the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met begins very early on in the school. The 'nurture provision' is a valuable and highly effective resource for pupils with the highest level of SEND needs. The school is, justifiably, proud of the impact of this facility on pupil outcomes.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Where this is not the case, the school is doing all that can reasonably be expected to secure improvements. School staff work effectively alongside the local authority to support families where pupils are absent because of individual medical needs.

Lessons are calm and purposeful, and there is very limited evidence of any low-level disruption. Teachers are able to teach very effectively as a result. At social times, most pupils chat to their friends. Pupils interact positively with school duty staff. The overwhelming majority of pupils make good choices about their behaviour. This is reflected in consistently low levels of suspensions.

The school's approach to the wider development of pupils' education is appropriate. It provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities. However, too few pupils take advantage of these opportunities, missing out on the benefits they provide. Pupils' personal development is considered carefully by the school, and most pupils feel this helps them to make good life choices. A small number of pupils do not value this part of their school education.

Careers information is shared in detail with pupils across year groups, and they benefit significantly from this. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Leaders at all levels work to develop the strength of the staff team. Staff describe access to national professional qualifications and 'in-house' professional development opportunities as having a positive impact on their practice. Leaders evaluate accurately the school's strengths and areas for development. This enables them to prioritise their actions effectively. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' wider development opportunities, in relation to extra-curricular activities and personal development, are not yet fully embedded in the culture of the school. Too few pupils are aware of the activities available to them, and as a result they do not attend activities or clubs. Equally, the school does not yet fully understand the impact of its wider development curriculum. The school should carefully review its approach to the

wider curriculum to ensure that a greater number of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, access and benefit from the school offer.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

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	121164
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10295005
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School Category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenny Youngs
Headteacher	Duncan Spalding
Website	www.aylshamhigh.com
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018

Information about this school

- The school uses 10 unregistered providers of 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the school's senior leaders and the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, French and English. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- 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.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

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