

St Augustine Academy

Address: Oakwood Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8AE

Unique reference number (URN): 136923

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have prioritised pupils' attendance. They rigorously monitor patterns of absence and take effective action to remove any barriers to attendance. This includes working closely with parents and external agencies. Staff use their knowledge of individual pupils to provide extensive pastoral support for those who find coming to school difficult. Leaders have created a positive culture of attendance. They are ambitious to reduce absence even further. Consequently, attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with national averages. Rates of persistent absence have fallen, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff and pupils note that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. Well-established routines help to ensure that the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Staff model the respectful attitudes they expect from pupils. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They typically have positive attitudes to learning. Leaders' work to help a small number of pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour has been successful. Suspensions have fallen sharply. Bullying and the use of discriminatory language are not tolerated. Pupils are confident that teachers deal with such instances swiftly and effectively.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. It is well planned and designed to build more complex knowledge over time. Leaders have made significant improvements to the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. They provide high quality training that ensures staff understand the school's agreed approaches to teaching.

Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Where the school's agreed approaches to teaching are applied consistently, learning is more effective. Teachers are experts in the subjects they teach. They present new material clearly and provide regular opportunities to help pupils remember what they have learned previously. Teachers check how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Typically, this is used to identify misconceptions. They make appropriate adaptations to learning tasks to reduce barriers to pupils' achievement. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders have an accurate understanding of where further improvement is needed in the quality of teaching. They have plans in place to address the variation in practice that exists in some curriculum areas.

Pupils who have not yet secured the foundational knowledge in reading and mathematics are well supported to catch up with their peers. For example, small-group and one-to-one help enable pupils to develop greater fluency in reading and language development.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Pupils are well supported and cared for in this inclusive school. Leaders have established effective systems to assess and identify barriers to learning pupils may have. This includes

ongoing communication with parents to identify any changing needs. Leaders provide teachers with appropriate training to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can successfully access the curriculum. Leaders regularly review the impact of the support given to pupils with SEND. They adapt their approach appropriately. However, there is less precision in how well leaders check the impact of the support given to disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders work well with external agencies to support pupils' learning effectively. Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND often get individual and small-group support that benefits them socially and emotionally. This enables them to develop strategies that help them thrive personally. Pupil premium funding is used strategically to enable disadvantaged pupils to benefit fully from the wider opportunities provided by the school. Leaders give careful consideration to the use of alternative provision. They ensure that it is rarely used and always in pupils' best interests.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken effective action to address weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching since the last inspection. Staff and pupils note that the improvements in behaviour have created a renewed focus on learning. Leaders have established a positive environment based on mutual respect. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for ongoing improvement.

Staff and those responsible for governance are united in their high aspirations for pupils. They are determined to do the best for all pupils. They act in pupils' best interests. Trustees and members of the local governing board have effective systems in place to hold leaders to account. They are knowledgeable about the school's priorities and closely monitor the impact of leaders' actions. Those responsible for governance ensure that the school meets its statutory responsibilities. This includes ensuring that pupil premium funding is used in the most appropriate way to benefit the most disadvantaged pupils.

The professional learning programme is comprehensive and of a high quality. It is focused on the areas leaders know need further improvement. For example, ongoing training is planned to secure consistency in teaching so pupils achieve well. Staff in the early stages of their career receive effective training and support. Staff are very positive about working at the school. They value the consideration leaders give to their workload and wellbeing. Staff feel trusted and well supported by leaders. They are proud to be members of this community, where 'leaders are there when you call'.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a coherent and appropriate personal development programme. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils understand the risks associated with being online and financial exploitation. Older pupils have a mature understanding of consent and respectful relationships. Leaders make considered adaptations to the PSHE curriculum so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well prepared for when they leave the school.

The personal development programme reflects the school's local context. For example, leaders prioritise the celebration of diversity. Pupils participate in days where they are encouraged to dress in outfits that represent their culture and share food from around the world. Pupils engage in the democratic process by electing their council leaders and head students. Weekly tutor sessions enable pupils to explore current affairs and debate topical issues. Consequently, pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils take advantage of a broad range of enrichment activities. For example, pupils visit local theatres and the Houses of Parliament. There are lunchtime and after-school clubs that include gardening, podcasting, retro gaming and chess. Pupils can develop their talents and interests through the many music, drama, dance and sporting opportunities. Leaders closely monitor the participation of pupils in extracurricular activities. Increasingly, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND benefit widely. Leaders use the pupil premium funding carefully to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are provided with the equipment they need to participate fully.

Pupils receive comprehensive careers guidance. They are well informed about their next steps for further education or training. Pupils have opportunities to engage with local employers and visit nearby colleges. Pupils in the specially resourced provision benefit from additional one-to-one guidance.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Overall attainment and progress in national examinations have been below national averages over time, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders have taken effective action to address previous weaknesses in the consistency of teaching. This is starting to have a positive impact on how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum. Pupils have a secure understanding of technical vocabulary and increasingly complex ideas. However, there is some variation in how well assessment information is used to address errors. This means that some pupils make the same mistakes over time.

Pupils' work shows that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the specially resourced provision, typically achieve well from their individual starting points. The school's inclusive work has enabled pupils working in the specially resourced provision to achieve very well personally and to thrive socially.

The gaps in essential knowledge of reading and mathematics are closing quickly for pupils who receive extra help.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to belong to the St Augustine Academy family. They are warmly welcomed each morning by caring staff who have high aspirations for them. This is a happy place to be where pupils feel a real sense of belonging. The school's value of community is central to the relationships that are forged by pupils and staff. Pupils learn from the respectful attitudes demonstrated by staff. Older pupils act as positive role models for pupils in lower years. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), take their leadership roles seriously. They act as proud food ambassadors and members of the chaplaincy team, who organise events for charity. Head students and the school council ensure that pupils' voices are heard and listened to.

Staff and pupils recognise the improvements in behaviour in recent years. Pupils value the recognition leaders give them when they behave well or demonstrate the school's values. Pupils are sensible during social times. They recognise that staff will keep them safe and take swift action if they report any problems. Bullying and instances of discriminatory language are rare. Pupils' attendance has improved in recent years, and they now attend well. Pupils have mature attitudes to difference and are proud of their diverse community. This shows that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils now enjoy more of their learning. They are benefiting from the recent improvements that leaders have made to the quality of the curriculum and teaching. Staff make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum to help reduce barriers for pupils with SEND. Typically, pupils build appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Pupils with SEND make suitable progress from their individual starting points. However, this is not reflected in pupils' achievement in national examinations at the end of Year 11.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that highly effective teaching is embedded across the school and that teachers consistently use checks on learning to adapt their teaching precisely, so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, learn and achieve well.
- Leaders should maintain their focus on improving attendance and continue their work to enable pupils to be highly engaged in, and show dedication to, their learning.

About this inspection

This school is part of Woodard Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mike Pettifer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sally Pelham.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspectors are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, the CEO, trustees and members of the local academy council. They also spoke with members of the senior leadership team and other school leaders.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Canterbury. The school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in September 2024.

The school has a specially resourced provision for 12 pupils with autism.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

The principal took up post after the last inspection.

Principal: Steffan Ball

Lead inspector:

Stephen Cattell, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Elaine Parkinson, Ofsted Inspector

David Stevenson, His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Wilson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

736

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

750

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

34.24%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.48%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

17.12%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	20.1%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.1%	45.9%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	23.5%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.1	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	37.3	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.80	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.43	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	11.1%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	18.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	11.3%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	28.7	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.5	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	31.5	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.38	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.92	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	11.1%	53.1%	-42.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	18.4%	53.1%	-34.7 pp
2022/23 (final)	11.3%	52.4%	-41.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	28.7	50.4	-21.7
2023/24 (final)	28.5	50.0	-21.5
2022/23 (final)	31.5	50.3	-18.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.38	0.16	-1.54
2022/23 (final)	-0.92	0.17	-1.09

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	82%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	9.2%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.8%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.1%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	27.4%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	32.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	36.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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