

# Inspection of a good school: Thomas Alleyne's High School

Dove Bank, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8DU

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Inspection dates:

19–20 November 2019

## Outcome

Thomas Alleyne's High School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

In this school, pupils are encouraged to be themselves. Pupils are confident to share their ideas and opinions. They have the chance to pursue their interests. For instance, sixth-form students told us about clubs they had set up.

A strength of the school is the number of trips and activities offered to pupils. These include theatre trips to London, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and after-school clubs in a range of sports, music, art and drama.

The school is calm and orderly, with a respectful school culture. Pupils told us they feel safe. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Staff care about the pupils. Pupils told us they have someone to talk to if they feel upset. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) value the 'base' where they can go throughout the day. They like having a quiet place to go to. They feel well supported.

Teachers want pupils to be the best they can be. For them, this means getting good examination results as well as preparing them to be good citizens. For example, a student successfully campaigned to reduce carbon emissions at the school. Drivers of the school buses are encouraged to switch off their engines when they are waiting for pupils outside the school.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the subjects that pupils follow. They have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils study a wide range of subjects in Year 9. This prepares them well for the choices they make in key stage 4. A full range of subjects are offered at key stages 4 and 5, including academic and vocational subjects. The number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate (a specific set of subjects at GCSE) is low. However, leaders are taking effective action to address this. Pupils value the opportunities the school offers. They speak enthusiastically about their lessons. These include those in animal care, photography and health and social care.

Pupils achieve well. Work in books is of a high quality. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The vast majority of Year 11 pupils go on to education, employment and training.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. In the vast majority of subjects, schemes of work are well planned. Pupils' knowledge and skills are developed well over time. For instance, in history, pupils study topics in a chronological order. This helps them to understand the links between key events. Pupils told us that the texts they study in English in Year 10 are revisited in Year 11. They say this helps them to have a good understanding of the texts. They feel well prepared for their GCSE examinations. The work in pupils' books supports this.

However, where lessons are not building on previous learning, for example in French, pupils do not have the knowledge they need to move on. In science, some pupils struggle to make links between topics. They cannot remember key information from previous lessons. This limits their progress.

The school provides good support and care for pupils with SEND. They can study all subjects. Most pupils with SEND achieve well. However, a few staff do not adapt or modify the curriculum or their teaching so that pupils with SEND achieve their very best.

Students in the sixth form speak positively about the school. They say that teachers are ambitious for what they can achieve. They value the opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school. For example, they can mentor younger pupils in mathematics, reading and science, become senior prefects and lead the school's anti-bullying campaign. Retention levels from Year 12 to Year 13 are high. Most students in Year 13 go on to university, including Oxbridge.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Low-level disruption is rare. Very little learning time is lost. Pupils told us that, if pupils misbehave, it is mainly with supply staff. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, it is dealt with quickly.

Leaders take care of their staff. They consider staff workload. For example, leaders consulted with staff over an increase in the number of times assessment information was collected for sixth-form students. An agreed solution was found.

Trustees and governors are ambitious for what the school and its pupils can achieve. They are committed to the school and play an active role in the life of the school. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to leaders. For example, trustees did a review of the sixth form. The actions taken by leaders as a result of their recommendations is starting to make a difference. The better level of engagement by sixth-form students in their study periods is due to teachers now setting specific work to be done during this time.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' welfare seriously. They quickly report any concerns, so that appropriate action is taken quickly when needed. Staff receive appropriate training and are aware of the specific risks pupils face in the local area. Pupils are told about these risks in assemblies and through the 'Respect' programme they follow in form time.

Leaders and staff work effectively with external agencies, including the police. Extra help is provided for families when they need it.

Records and files are well organised. Appropriate checks are completed on all adults who work at or visit the school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The vast majority of subjects offer high-quality provision. Their curriculums are coherently planned and sequenced cumulatively, so that pupils know more and remember more. As a result, pupils achieve well. However, this is not yet fully embedded across a few subjects. Consequently, pupils do not do as well as they could in those subjects. Leaders need to continue to support curriculum leaders to ensure that pupils get the same high quality of provision in every subject.
- The school provides effective care and nurture for SEND pupils. Their outcomes, however, could be better. Leaders need to ensure that the information provided for staff is used effectively to meet the needs of SEND pupils in the classroom. All staff need to have additional specialist training on how to meet these pupils' needs.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Thomas Alleyne's High School to be good on 11 February 2016.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144002
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122514
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1042
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	249
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mr Sid Slater
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Rudge
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thomasalleyne.s.uk">www.thomasalleyne.s.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–11 February 2016

## Information about this school

- In April 2017, the school became an Academy converter and became part of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.
- The Uttoxeter Learning Trust consists of seven schools.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new deputy headteacher, two new assistant headteachers (one of whom is also a curriculum leader), and a further four new curriculum leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the business manager, the assistant special educational needs coordinator, members of the governing body including the chair, the chief executive officer and the chair of the trust.

- The inspection focused deeply on English, science, design and technology, French and history. We met with curriculum leaders, teachers from the subject areas and groups of pupils. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- An inspector checked the school's single central record and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. We spoke to staff and pupils to find out how pupils are kept safe.
- We reviewed the 60 responses on Parent View, including 18 free-text responses, the 45 responses from the staff survey and the 81 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

Sal Yunus

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