

Inspection of a good school: Tewkesbury School

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8DF

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have raised expectations of academic standards in the school. Pupils are resilient and do not give up. Pupils attend school regularly. They are punctual to lessons. Most pupils behave responsibly in lessons and when walking around the school.

Sixth-form students are an integral part of the school. They act as mentors to younger pupils and support them, for example, by listening to pupils read and running sports clubs.

Some pupils expressed concerns about bullying. These pupils tend not to report bullying because they are unsure of the consequences. Some older pupils feel frustrated that they do not know what happens following reports to staff about bullying.

Leaders in charge of behaviour and welfare have made changes to the pupil support centre but these are not yet having an impact. Pupils have received important messages about the concerns of sexual harassment in assemblies. Personal, social, health and economic education is concentrating on appropriate and respectful relationships this term.

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

Curriculum leaders have a determination to improve what pupils learn. However, too many curriculum plans do not help pupils to remember more over time. This limits the breadth of learning in some subjects. Equally, pupils are not building on prior learning sufficiently so are not able to articulate their learning. Some pupils lack guidance on how to complete written work, so a series of unfinished and disconnected tasks are evident in their workbooks. Most pupils present their work well but there is no extra support, beyond using computers, for those who are struggling with their handwriting.

Many teachers are quick to respond to pupils' misconceptions in a sensitive way. As a result, pupils show confidence to keep trying. Sixth-form students are well supported. They receive effective guidance and show strong independent study skills. Students enjoy their own space in the school.

This academic year, changes to the curriculum allow more pupils to study the English Baccalaureate subjects, especially languages. Pupils in the lower school are benefiting from a broader choice of subjects.

Some pupils in key stage 3 have fallen behind with their reading, mainly because of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. They receive short bursts of tuition that help them to catch up. Leaders ensure they do not miss out on their curriculum entitlement while receiving support to become more fluent readers. There are other plans afoot to improve the reading culture of the school, but it is too soon to see any impact.

Low-level disruption is rare. For the few pupils who cannot manage their behaviour well, there are staged and inclusive practices to support them. Pupils with highly complex needs who cannot cope in school attend a nearby alternative provision which provides individual support. Regular reviews of pupils' progress enable some pupils to return to school.

The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has identified the correct pupils who need additional support in the school, such as education, health and care plans. He has a team of well-trained teaching assistants. The SENCo has engaged with external specialists to help pupils with psychological, therapeutic and communication needs. However, some pupils do not always have their needs met. The few pupils from the neighbouring special school who attend lessons are successful in their courses and the transition for them, on both sites, is seamless.

Leaders share their responsibilities and provide capacity for improvements. They are continually researching ways to ease the burden of excessive and ineffectual assessment. Teachers appreciate the fact that the number of formal assessments each year has halved to ease their workload. The recently appointed deputy headteacher in charge of behaviour and welfare is tackling the issues head-on. The new chair of governors has made important changes in a short space of time and understands her strategic role in managing the accountability of school leaders.

There are many cultural and sporting opportunities in which pupils can engage. These stalled due to COVID-19 but are starting again. However, the Ofsted pupil survey shows that a number of the respondents choose not to join in with anything.

In the presence of the headteacher, inspectors agreed that the quality of education and anti-bullying strategies may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leaders identify the most vulnerable pupils effectively and work with external agencies to improve the life chances of these pupils. Leaders are not afraid to challenge local authority thresholds when necessary.

Recruitment checks are in order and senior staff have received safer recruitment training.

As in many schools, there have been cases of sexual harassment through social media. However, leaders have responded to Ofsted's sexual abuse review promptly. Staff receive up-to-date training on current safeguarding issues. The designated safeguarding leader has made several recent changes to policies, but these are yet to be put into practice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils shared concerns about bullying that they do not report. This suggests pupils may suffer in silence because of ongoing bullying issues. Leaders must ensure that communication, and education, that lead to a culture of trust and respect in the school are created with urgency.
- In some subjects, curriculum leaders have not planned the content and sequencing of the curriculum well enough. The teaching of the curriculum becomes disconnected, and pupils fail to learn effectively. Leaders need to review the subject curriculums to ensure that pupils learn more and remember more over time.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in 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 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.

If you are the school and 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

Unique reference number	137752
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10199618
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1302
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Maizonnier
Headteacher	Gary Watson
Website	http://www.tewkesburyschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Eight pupils attend Abbey View Free School for alternative provision. The free school is run by this school and two neighbouring secondary schools: Cleeve School and Chipping Campden School.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the SENCo, the chair and vice-chair of governors and six other governors, and the headteacher of the neighbouring special school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, languages, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector checked the recruitment processes and spoke with the safeguarding leaders. Inspectors spoke with teachers, staff and pupils to gauge their understanding of safeguarding and keeping safe.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Peck

Ofsted Inspector

Tonya Hill

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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