

Inspection of Sir Thomas Rich's School

Oakleaze, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 0LF

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sir Thomas Rich's School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Sir Thomas Rich's School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. 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 in Sir Thomas Rich's School's effectiveness before and after it converted to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy in the school. They feel a huge sense of loyalty. Those who join the school in the sixth form say the same. Every pupil wears their badge with pride. Pupils feel safe and say that they can go to anyone in the school if they have concerns.

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils to which they respond willingly. Behaviour is impeccable. Led by the headteacher, there is a culture of respect that permeates the school. As a result, bullying is rare. Staff have taught pupils about the negative impact of banter. Consequently, pupils appreciate the importance of equality and respect differences.

In some subject curriculums, teachers need to think more carefully about how to teach their subjects as well as what to teach. In a minority of cases, the ability of pupils is not reflected in the teaching, and standards are set too low.

Extra-curricular activities abound, especially sports. Most pupils enjoy these and attend sessions before and after school. There are many other opportunities, too, such as drama, debating and chess.

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

There is a whole-school vision for the curriculum. Most subject leaders have embraced this, and pupils are learning what they need to know at the right time. The breadth of the curriculum allows more pupils than average to gain the English baccalaureate. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, but, at times, they do not deliver the learning effectively. When this happens, pupils do not understand fully so do not retain their learning over time.

Pupils are very articulate and their skills in discussing learning develop well. However, this does not translate consistently into skilfully crafted writing. As a result, leaders are paying more attention to writing and grammar in key stage 3 currently.

Formal assessment of learning happens at least once a term. Teachers explain misunderstandings to pupils so that pupils' knowledge is secure and ready for future learning.

Pupils are fluent readers and staff provide reading lists to every year group to broaden pupils' vocabulary and comprehension. However, staff are not routinely checking if pupils read any of the optional suggestions, so the good intentions falter at times. It is a similar picture in the sixth form. Staff provide purposeful work and reading lists for the transition between Year 11 and 12. However, too few students read the recommended texts so come less prepared for their studies. When students have read the books, they are able to form opinions and debate with confidence. From September 2020, pupils have been reading tried and tested novels in class

with their tutors, to expand their cultural understanding. Pupils enjoy this and their diction improves as a result.

Pupils learn how to be good citizens of the future. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum provides age-appropriate training on positive relationships, financial planning, diversity, and current topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Ofsted's sexual abuse review. Pupils engage well with the information presented. It is clear from pupils' social interactions that they are maturing into highly responsible young people.

The careers leader ensures that pupils are aware of jobs in the local area, as well as preparing them for life beyond school at universities and apprenticeships. The school holds successful careers fairs every year where local, national and global companies come to share employment opportunities with pupils. Universities from across the country also attend. From key stage 3 onwards, pupils receive useful information, including from neighbouring schools and colleges, in time for pupils to choose post-14 choices. This is in line with the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Staff do everything possible to make sure that disadvantaged pupils have the same opportunities as others. In their learning, teachers support them sensitively with bespoke help. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has provided individual plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders, including trustees, care about staff; this has been particularly evident during the pandemic. They make sure that staff are not overwhelmed by their workload. Staff value leaders' commitment to them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Trustees and leaders are trained in safer recruitment and check the processes and information about staff diligently.

Staff receive up-to-date training on safeguarding and use the electronic system for sharing concerns. This allows for early identification of pupils who may be vulnerable so that help can be put in place quickly.

Leaders work effectively with external agencies to make sure that pupils are safe and receive the right help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subject curriculums, teachers need to think more carefully about how to teach their subjects as well as what to teach. Where this is not the case, pupils do not learn effectively and retain knowledge over time. Curriculum leaders need to share with teachers the pedagogical approaches needed when teaching some subject content.
- At times, leaders are not demanding enough about the accountability of staff. There is, therefore, not sufficient monitoring of school processes and practice. Leaders need to ensure that they are clear about the expectations they have so that pupils benefit more from any work undertaken.

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	136306
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10199397
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1153
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Ogle
Headteacher	Matthew Morgan
Website	http://strschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in 2013.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Sir Thomas Rich's School converted to become an academy in October 2010. When its predecessor school, Sir Thomas Rich's School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 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, curriculum leaders of history, biology and music, and the chair of trustees and four other trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, languages, business studies, economics and technology. 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.
- Inspectors 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 Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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