

Inspection of a good school: Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport

Bury Water Lane, Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3TR

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 February 2022

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?

Most pupils say they enjoy school and are proud to be part of Joyce Frankland Academy. They like the impressive range of opportunities available for them to take part in, for example sports and the music and drama productions that are open to everyone. Pupils' achievements, including beyond examination success are valued and widely celebrated.

Relationships between pupils, students and staff are generally positive. While pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school, a small group do not behave as well as they should, using inappropriate language and disrupting learning for others. Some pupils feel that staff are not consistent in managing poor behaviour when it happens, and do not always challenge it effectively so that it improves. Pupils say that school is a safe place and that, although there is occasional bullying, staff help to sort things out. They know what to do if they are worried and how to report concerns.

Careers education helps pupils and students in the sixth form prepare for life after school. They enjoy taking on leadership roles, for example acting as prefects, house captains and mentors. Sixth formers recently took part in a working group to help inform ongoing improvements to the school-wide programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), including the focus on respectful relationships.

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

Senior leaders, governors and the trust share the same ambitious vision for all pupils and students to become 'independent, insightful inquisitive and imaginative learners'. Following a recent review, they have acted to improve the breadth and depth of the curriculum for pupils in Year 7 to Year 9, especially in art, technology and modern languages. GCSE option choices are now made in Year 9 to support this. Continuing to extend the range of opportunities for older pupils, including for students in the sixth form, is an ongoing leadership priority.

Leaders have begun to make changes to curriculum plans across the school and are focusing on ensuring clear progression routes from Year 7 through to the end of Year 13. However, plans are at varying stages of development and implementation, especially at key stage 3. Some subject leaders have not thought carefully enough yet about the content taught at different points. Opportunities to revisit important knowledge and skills are not routinely highlighted. Consequently, some pupils struggle to remember previous learning and so do not achieve as well as they could.

Checks on learning are not always linked precisely to what pupils need to know to achieve well at the next stage. At times, assessments are matched to complex end points too quickly. This means that the focus is too broad to pinpoint the precise needs of pupils who fall behind, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Wider work to support pupils with SEND is improving the information teachers hold to help them to adapt learning to meet individual needs, but this is at an early stage.

Ensuring that pupils read widely and often is a leadership priority. The English team has made changes to extend the range of literature pupils have access to before they begin their GCSE studies in Year 10. Opportunities for quiet reading are built into the start of every English lesson. Exploring Shakespearian text, for example, through the theme of 'heroes and villains', helps Year 7 pupils to remember characters and to make useful connections between different aspects of their learning. Work to establish a whole-school approach to promoting a love of reading is part of a development project this year.

Pupils attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. While most behave well. A significant minority do not live up to leaders' high expectations. Staff are not always consistent in how the behaviour policy is used in lessons, or in challenging individuals who struggle to regulate their behaviour around school. This is confusing for those pupils concerned and for others.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and RSHE curriculum have been revised in line with statutory requirements. Leaders use local and national information effectively in order to make changes linked to safety, healthy relationships, tolerance and respect, including about appropriate and safe use of social media. Pupils' and students' extensive sporting successes are a strength of the school. Wider personal development opportunities, such as educational visits and work experience, are back in the offer this year. Careers education helps pupils and students to prepare effectively to take the next steps when they leave, including to university and apprenticeships.

Leaders and governors are committed to the success of the school. Consequently, they are working closely with the trust to accelerate the implementation of planned improvements and curriculum changes. Most staff say they feel well supported. Some subject leads are still developing the curriculum to ensure that subject content is well defined and consistently taught in the most logical order over time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding training is up to date. Staff know what to do if a pupil is at risk of harm. Appropriate action is taken when concerns are raised, including through work with children's services, health care professionals and the police. Additional support, such as counselling, is available to some pupils in school. The PSHE curriculum is closely linked to safeguarding, including in how pupils are taught how to stay safe and to form healthy relationships. Pupils are helped to understand how to manage risks online and in situations beyond school. The single central record of pre-employment checks on new staff meets requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While pupils usually behave well, some poor behaviour, such as inappropriate language and disruption to lessons, is not managed effectively. The school's behaviour policy is not applied consistently, and this confuses pupils. Leaders, including governors and the trust, should ensure that staff at all levels are clear about expectations of pupils' behaviour and that they are supported to manage it well.
- Leaders have made changes to the curriculum to create a full three-year programme at key stage 3. Planned changes are at varying stages of development in different subjects. Some subject leaders and their teams are still setting out the detail of what pupils will need to know, in which order they should learn it, and when previous learning will be revisited. Leaders should ensure that subject teams have the support they need to plan and implement curriculum changes effectively, so that all pupils achieve their potential.
- Revised systems to check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum are still evolving. Assessments are not always linked closely enough to the detail of what pupils should know and be able to apply to new learning. Some checks are matched to complex end points too early. This means that the precise information needed to help pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly is not clear, including for pupils with SEND. Leaders should ensure that assessment planning is systematically linked to the curriculum changes underway and that monitoring processes evaluate precisely and accurately what is working well and what needs to improve.

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/outstanding. 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 May 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	138734
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10193980
Type of school	Secondary
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	1003
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Lawton
Principal	Duncan Roberts
Website	www.jfan.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport is an average-sized secondary school.
- The number of pupils on roll, including students in the sixth form, has increased since the previous inspection.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2012. It joined Anglian Learning, a multi-academy trust, in January 2020.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to senior leadership roles and some new subject leaders have recently been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, including the chief executive and another senior leader from the trust, the school's special educational needs coordinator, who is also an assistant principal, and other staff in meetings and around the school.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with two parents and, in another call, with a representative of the local authority. She also met with four governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: science, English, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about work in a sample of pupils' books.
- They also spoke informally with pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes, taking account of their behaviour between lessons and as they moved around the school.
- The documentation checked included school policies, school improvement plans, curriculum information, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance records, the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff and additional information on safer recruitment provided by the trust.
- Inspectors considered 207 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 202 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and 35 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.
- During the inspection, inspectors were made aware of a serious safeguarding concern under investigation by appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Susan Cox

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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