

Inspection of Kirkby High School

Bracknell Avenue, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside L32 9PP

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Kirkby High School, which is a calm and welcoming place for pupils to learn. They feel happy and safe. Pupils appreciate the strong relationships that they forge with staff. Pupils celebrate differences between people. They do not tolerate discrimination. Pupils are confident that leaders will quickly act to address any incidents of bullying.

Pupils have pride in their school. They take good care of the classrooms, corridors and social areas. Most pupils behave sensibly and have fun during social times. They are generally friendly and courteous, including when speaking to each other.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Most pupils live up to these expectations and achieve well across a range of subjects. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities outside of lessons that inspire and interest them. These activities broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of the world. Many perform in drama productions, enjoy taking part in science and rainbow clubs and play football against other schools. Parents and carers are generally supportive of the school.

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

Trustees and governors have overseen a number of improvements in the school since the last inspection.

Leaders have thoughtfully redesigned the curriculum so that pupils can build on what they already know. The curriculum is broad and suitably ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

More recently, leaders have increased the number of pupils that are studying a modern foreign language. This is increasing the proportion of pupils who follow the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects. The EBacc is now at the heart of the school's curriculum.

Many subject leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge that pupils should learn and in which order it should be taught. These curriculums are well organised. They include opportunities for pupils to remember, practise and build on what they already know. Pupils achieve well in many subjects. However, in a small number of subjects the curriculum has not been considered in as much detail. This hampers pupils' achievement in these subjects.

Teachers typically have a sound knowledge of their subjects. They ensure that pupils revisit their learning regularly. Teachers check carefully for any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use this information to adapt their teaching so that pupils can gain

or recover any learning that they have missed or forgotten. Teachers are proficient in selecting appropriate activities that develop pupils' subject knowledge.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and effectively. Teachers adapt how pupils access learning so that these pupils can learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school and achieve well.

Leaders have begun to introduce a focus on developing pupils' reading and vocabulary knowledge in subjects. Pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read are beginning to benefit from a programme to help them to read more fluently. This helps these pupils to access some subjects in the wider curriculum. However, this emphasis on reading is not fully in place across the whole curriculum. This hinders pupils' understanding of the curriculum in some subjects.

Pupils generally behave well during lessons. Lessons are typically calm places, where learning is rarely disrupted.

The personal development programme prepares pupils well for their future in modern Britain. Pupils learn about the features of healthy relationships, including consent. They understand the negative impact of prejudice on others. Leaders ensure that careers guidance is well established across all years. Pupils increasingly move on to appropriate destinations at the end of Year 11.

Trustees and governors hold leaders to account successfully for the quality of education in the school. Leaders take account of staff's workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Teachers know pupils and their families well. They are alert and vigilant to safeguarding concerns. Adults report concerns about pupils in a timely manner and leaders follow up on these concerns appropriately. Leaders ensure that teachers receive appropriate safeguarding training. This includes issues such as peer-on-peer abuse. Leaders work effectively with external partners to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from risks, including knife crime. Pupils also learn about keeping safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, particularly where leaders are newly appointed or inexperienced, the curriculum thinking is not as strong as it should be. In these subjects, leaders have not identified in sufficient detail the knowledge that they

want pupils to learn and the order in which this content should be taught. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well in the curriculum as they should. Leaders should ensure that these subject leaders are trained to develop the curriculum effectively.

- Some pupils struggle to read. This hinders their achievement in the intended curriculum. Leaders should continue to develop the reading skills of these pupils to help them become confident and fluent readers.

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	140001
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10216073
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	938
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Wilson
Headteacher	Rochelle Conefrey
Website	kirkbyhighschool.net
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Kirkby High School is a member of the Rowan Learning Trust.
- A new chair of the local governing board was appointed in September 2021.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at five registered providers.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, governors, the trust chief executive officer and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors also met with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, other senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, design technology, history, religious education, mathematics and English. They visited a sample of lessons in

these subjects, discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' records of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. They met with the leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about leaders' work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included some free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

David Hampson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Chris Meldrum	Ofsted Inspector
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