

Inspection of Sir John Deane's College

Inspection dates:

4 to 7 October 2022

Overall effectiveness**Outstanding**

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Education programmes for young people

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Information about this provider

Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College is a 16 to 19 academy. Formerly Sir John Deane's Grammar School founded in 1557, the college is currently one of three academies in The Sir John Brunner Foundation, which is a multi-academy trust. Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College offers a range of provision for students aged 16 to 19 years who follow a full-time study programme.

At the time of inspection, 1,834 students were on education programmes for young people. Most study A levels. A few young people study a 'mixed' A level and vocational pathway or a full BTEC vocational programme.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students who study at Sir John Deane's College do exceptionally well. Their behaviours and attitudes fully align with the college's ethos of being 'curious, caring and responsible'. Students are proud to study at the college and feel that they are part of a community. They are highly motivated, caring and conscientious individuals who consistently demonstrate exemplary behaviours.

Students thrive in an inclusive culture at the college. Teachers and mentors provide extensive wrap-around support that makes students feel valued. This includes students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers, mentors and staff have an unwavering desire to empower students to improve their self-belief. This helps students to be successful in their exams, further study or employment. Students know and greatly appreciate this. Consequently, students leave the college as mature young adults with a set of values that they say will stay with them throughout their lives.

Students develop their confidence and self-esteem as a result of their courses. They routinely participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards at gold and silver levels, reading mentoring with local primary school children and raising money for a broad range of charities. Students hold bake sales and raffles. They donate clothes, sanitary products and food to community projects. They enjoy Tai Chi classes and join football, basketball, hockey, rowing or netball teams. This helps students to develop their talents and interests as they mature and move towards adulthood.

Attendance is excellent. Students arrive promptly and are well prepared for their classes. They are excited about their learning and consistently apply themselves in their studies. Students' folders are meticulously organised. However, a few students feel that the homework they receive is unmanageable.

Students feel safe in college. They feel protected from bullying and harassment. Students know to whom to report any safeguarding-related concerns. They are confident that staff will listen to them.

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

Governance and leadership are outstanding. Governors, leaders and staff are extremely ambitious for their students. They are committed to providing high-quality education. This means that students achieve their full potential.

Senior leaders and governors promote especially high standards in all aspects of the college. A culture of relentless self and continuous improvement permeates the college. Senior leaders accurately identify good practice and quickly rectify any areas requiring improvement. Consequently, students benefit from a very high standard of education.

Leaders and managers plan an ambitious curriculum for students, including those with SEND. They sequence the curriculum logically, building effectively on earlier learning. Teachers use constant repetition and consolidation to build the foundations for learning. The curriculum becomes progressively more difficult while utilising skills and knowledge that have been committed to long-term memory. For example, psychology students first learn about research methods, specific psychology terminology and basic mathematics skills. They then learn about the core psychology theories before moving on to applied psychology such as mental health, sports and criminal psychology. As a result, students know more and remember more throughout their courses.

Teachers are exceedingly passionate about the subjects they teach. They are very well qualified. Teachers work cohesively with mentors to provide excellent teaching and support for students. Teachers and mentors benefit from high-quality and highly effective professional development. For instance, transgender awareness, mental health first-aid training (youth), introduction to sexuality awareness, questioning skills and how to teach difficult topics. Consequently, teachers and mentors further improve their subject knowledge and expertise.

Teachers use a wide range of highly effective strategies to teach and assess students. This includes group and individual activities, quizzes, discussions, video clips, questioning, projects and sample papers. Politics students complete a research project and present their findings to college governors and staff. Mathematics students successfully develop their mathematical skills when working on composite and inverse functions. This results in students making exceptional progress in their studies.

Teachers systematically link learning to practical examples. For instance, in biology, students learn that they are breaking hydrogen bonds when using hair straighteners to straighten their hair. Sociology students learn how different government policies have impacted the life chances of different social groups. This deepens students' understanding of complex subjects.

Teachers, mentors and staff provide students with an extensive range of impartial careers information, advice and guidance before and during their courses. As a result, students make well-informed and aspirational choices about their future education and career options. Students with SEND benefit greatly from highly effective transitional arrangements, which ensure they enrol on the best course to meet their individual career goals. Most students go to university, and a few progress onto apprenticeships.

Leaders place a very high priority on their staff's mental health and well-being. They ensure that staff have the appropriate time to mark work and plan their lessons. Staff appreciate this. However, a few teachers feel that their workload is too high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance and protection. They systematically promote zero tolerance of bullying and harassment. The designated safeguarding lead and their deputies are very well trained and experienced to carry out their roles effectively. Staff benefit from regular training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty and know how to report any concerns. Leaders carry out appropriate staff checks during the recruitment process.

As part of a highly effective personal development curriculum, teachers and mentors instil in students that sexual harassment and sexual violence are unacceptable behaviours. Students understand the importance of consent. They know that it is inappropriate to make sexist remarks or tell sexist jokes.

Leaders provide a range of effective support to students who have mental health concerns. Students have access to counsellors with specific expertise in suicide, mental health and eating disorders.

Provider details

Unique reference number	145748
Address	Monarch Drive Northwich CW9 8AF
Contact number	01606810020
Website	www.sjd.ac.uk
Principal	Christopher Atherton
Provider type	16 to 19 academy
Date of previous inspection	February 2008
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal – curriculum and quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider’s most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students’ work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider’s documentation and records.

Inspection team

Kim Bleasdale, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
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Tanya Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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