

Inspection of a good school: Joseph Rowntree School

Haxby Road, New Earswick, York, North Yorkshire YO32 4BZ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Outcome

Joseph Rowntree School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school, including those in the sixth form, value their learning. All pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities needs (SEND). Teachers care about pupils and help them to do their best. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.

Leaders, governors and staff have high expectations for what pupils and students should achieve. Teachers are passionate about their subjects, and this stimulates pupils' interest in their studies. In lessons and around the school, pupils follow the routines and expectations set by staff. Pupils are polite and friendly. The majority of pupils behave well.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy. They are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. If bullying happens, staff resolve this swiftly and effectively. Pupils are confident that if they have a problem there will be someone to talk to and that they will receive the help they need. This care and support is a strength of the school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Leaders try to capture the interests of every pupil, including those who are disadvantaged, with a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Pupils and students in the sixth form enjoy their involvement in the school's annual production, which features highly in the life of the school.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have enhanced the quality of the curriculum for pupils, including those with SEND. Subject teachers have carefully identified the knowledge that all pupils need to learn. Pupils receive strong guidance about the next steps in their learning journey. Students who choose to stay on into the sixth form are well supported and progress well.

Leaders have an ambitious vision for providing pupils with a high-quality education. They are mindful of staff well-being and consider staff workload. They give teachers the time to be able to give their best to pupils. Leaders provide teachers with a programme of training and professional development that is well suited to their needs and to those of the school. This training is valued by teachers who are trusted as professionals by school leaders.

Teachers check pupils' understanding of the curriculum. They use these checks to pinpoint any gaps in learning so that they can close these promptly. Teachers have strong, and in some cases excellent, subject knowledge. They are enthusiastic about their subjects and explain new learning clearly. Their teaching helps pupils to remember important ideas and information.

Pupils behave well. Lessons across the school typically take place without disruption. Leaders monitor patterns of behaviour and act swiftly if they identify any problems. Students in the sixth form display mature attitudes and are confident and articulate.

The Wiltshire resource base for pupils with SEND is at the heart of the school. There are effective systems to support pupils with SEND. Their progress is carefully checked. Such systems help pupils with SEND to achieve well. However, some parents and carers of pupils with SEND do not feel that the school communicates well enough with them. As a result, they are unsure of how their child's needs are being met.

Leaders have improved the systems to help pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. Weaker readers are supported well by staff trained in delivering phonics. This helps these pupils to become more confident and fluent in their reading. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' and students' subject-specific vocabulary. However, some older pupils do not read as often or as widely as they should. This can limit their depth of learning across the curriculum.

The sixth-form curriculum is strong. Students can choose a wide range of subjects. Leaders have carefully planned what knowledge students need to gain in each subject. Teachers focus on recapping important knowledge. This helps students to commit important concepts to their long-term memory. Sixth-form students achieve well and move on to appropriate destinations.

The wider personal development of pupils is a strength. Careers education enables pupils to make informed choices about their future in education, training or work. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme teaches pupils, among other things, about keeping healthy and safe. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Assemblies, tutor time and external trips all contribute to the high-quality delivery of the PSHE programme. Pupils who attend the popular school-based LGBTQ+ group, 'Skittles', are well supported by the school community.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for all pupils, including those in the sixth form, to develop their talents and interests. Pupils benefit from well-equipped facilities for sports, theatre and music. Enthusiastic and experienced teachers encourage wide participation for pupils of all abilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Relationships in school are strong between staff and pupils. Staff recognise when action needs to be taken to keep pupils safe. Regular training ensures that staff are kept up to date with required legislation and understand their responsibilities well.

Leaders are well informed about local and national safeguarding matters. They work well with external agencies, including the police, to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help they need.

The welfare, well-being and safety of all pupils are high priorities for the school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe through the effective personal development programme. They all have an adult they can talk to if any problems arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parents and carers do not feel sufficiently aware of the systems in place to support their children. This can limit their ability to complement the support that their children receive. It can also limit their ability to check the impact of support on their child. Leaders should communicate more effectively with parents and carers of pupils with SEND to help them to contribute to and check the impact of the support that their children receive.
- Staff do not encourage older pupils to read widely or often enough. This means that opportunities to enhance pupils' vocabulary and depth of knowledge across the curriculum are missed. Staff should further develop the school's approach to reading so that older pupils read with purpose across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, then we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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.

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	121711
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10226879
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	1270
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robin Stafford
Headteacher	David Hewitt
Website	www.josephrowntree.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an enhanced resourced base, Wiltshire, for SEND pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The present headteacher took up post in April 2019.
- The school uses six alternative providers.

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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to staff at one alternative provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: design technology, geography, mathematics and modern foreign languages. 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 spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils and students about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 102 members of staff who had responded to Ofsted's online staff survey, the 168 responses to the pupil survey and the 118 Ofsted Parent View responses, including 113 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Tudor Griffiths, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Barton	Ofsted Inspector

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