

# Inspection of Formby High School

Freshfield Road, Formby, Liverpool, Merseyside L37 3HW

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

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 Formby High School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Formby High School to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The pupils describe Formby High School as a welcoming and friendly school where people's differences are celebrated. Pupils settle into school quickly and soon become part of the school community. Pupils are inspired to succeed. Pupils told inspectors that they are proud to attend the school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They have cultivated a kind and considerate school community where pupils, and students in the sixth form, feel safe and happy. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with their teachers. Classrooms are calm places to learn. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and they work hard.

Leaders deal with bullying and name-calling effectively. Pupils are confident that leaders and staff will listen to their concerns and are swift to act. Pupils appreciate the care and guidance from the school's pastoral team.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities. These happen before and after school. Pupils and students spoke enthusiastically about taking part in a range of sporting, arts and reading activities, for example the teen book club and skateboard club.

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

Leaders have designed a rich and vibrant curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study the whole curriculum. In the sixth form, students can choose from an extensive range of academic and vocational subjects. They appreciate this broad offer which includes politics, engineering and digital media.

The quality of the curriculum thinking is consistent across the school. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the building blocks of knowledge that they want pupils to learn over time. They have established how new concepts and ideas link together and this helps pupils to build securely on earlier learning.

Teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. Teachers plan regular opportunities to recap and reinforce pupils' learning. This helps pupils to embed essential subject knowledge as they progress through the years. Teachers use a range of different methods to check what pupils have remembered and understood. This means that most teachers can quickly identify pupils' misconceptions before moving on to new learning. That said, in some subjects, teachers are not using assessments effectively to pinpoint gaps in pupils' learning. This means that teachers in some subjects are less certain about what learning pupils should revisit before moving on.

Leaders have prioritised reading. There is a well-developed culture of reading for pleasure. Pupils appreciate dedicated library lessons. They make good use of the

library and the many activities on offer there. For instance, pupils who are avid readers are further developed through the higher qualification project. Staff work with pupils who need extra help with their reading. Staff are quick to identify and address weaknesses in pupils' phonics knowledge. This ensures that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, can catch up with their peers.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils and students with SEND. The needs of these pupils are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders have developed well-thought-out individualised programmes that ensure the needs of this group of pupils are being met. Teachers are provided with the information and guidance they need to support pupils with SEND, meet their needs and help them to access the curriculum.

Pupils display very high standards of conduct during lesson changeovers and on the school grounds. Pupils are courteous and respectful to staff and visitors. Lessons are focused, productive and generally disruption free. Students in the sixth form demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning and are excellent role models for younger pupils in the school.

Pupils and students enjoy being in this inclusive community. Pupils are proud to be part of a school family that welcomes people of all cultures and faiths, including recent refugee families. Leaders have designed a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme that teaches pupils and students about the issues and risks teenagers face growing up in modern Britain. However, some pupils told inspectors that they found the personal development programme to be overly repetitive and that activities were not always relevant to them. Leaders should ensure that the PSHE curriculum matches the ambition of subject curriculums, through careful identification and development of the key knowledge pupils need for life beyond school.

Leaders have provided a wide range of activities beyond the classroom. Pupils and students attend a diverse range of clubs such as musical theatre, steel pans, British sign language and volleyball. Pupils and students in the sixth form receive an extensive programme of careers education. This helps them to make well-informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training. A high proportion of students in the sixth form secure places on competitive university courses.

Governors are highly committed to the ethos of the school. They support leaders well and work closely with them to ensure they have clear oversight of all aspects of school life. Staff say that they are proud to work at Formby High School. Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload. They appreciate the steps leaders have taken to look after their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive suitable

safeguarding training at regular intervals. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. They report any concerns promptly.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the safeguarding risks that pupils and students may face that are particular to the local context. For instance, these include the possible risk of drug misuse and county lines illegal drug transportation. Staff and pupils have training so that they know how to safely manage and mitigate these risks.

The leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are proactive in their approach to identifying pupils who may need support. They make timely referrals to external agencies to ensure the right support is in place for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Through the curriculum, pupils and students are taught about healthy relationships, consent and grooming. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils know who they can speak to if they are feeling worried.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, assessments do not inform teachers how well pupils are learning because they are not yet fully matched to the intended curriculum. As a result, pupils can miss learning something important without teachers knowing. Leaders should assure themselves that pupils are learning all the essential knowledge set out in their curriculum plans.
- Leaders' high ambitions for the PSHE curriculum are not realised because the curriculum has not been linked together thoughtfully enough. As a result, some pupils, including students in the sixth form, are not as well prepared for life beyond school as they could be. Leaders should assure themselves that the PSHE curriculum is being structured and delivered just as effectively as in other subjects.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137436
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226354
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,165
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Pearson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dominic Mackenzie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.formbyhighschool.com">www.formbyhighschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Formby High School converted to become an academy school in September 2011. When its predecessor school, Formby High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Leaders use three registered alternative provisions and two unregistered alternative provisions for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors also spoke with members of the local governing body, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the leaders' self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art, English, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sheldon Logue	Ofsted Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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